Rev.d JAMES HERVEY, A.M.

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MEDITATIONS AND CONTEMPLATIONS.

CONTAINING,

MEDITATIONS among the TOMBS:
REFLECTIONS on a FLOWER-GARDEN:
And, A DESCANT on CREATION.

CONTEMPLATIONS on the NIGHT:
CONTEMPLATIONS on the STARRY HEAVENS:
And,
A WINTER-PIECE.

By JAMES HERVEY, A. M.
Late Rector of *Weſton-Favell*, in *Northamptonſhire*.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

A NEW EDITION.

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644
14

ADVERTISEMENT

TO THE

THIRD EDITION.

I MUST intreat the purchaſers of the former *editions, to excuſe the freedom I have taken, in making ſeveral conſiderable additions to* this. *It has been done at the perſuaſion of ſome judicious friends, who apprehended the piece might be more uſeful, and leſs unworthy of the public patronage, if it touched upon ſome very intereſting ſubjects, hitherto omitted. As I had no views, but to render the performance more pleaſing and ſerviceable; no reader, I hope, will be offended at my practice, or complain of it as* injurious. *Nevertheleſs, as I would willingly avoid, whatever might ſeem to ſtand in need of an* APOLOGY; *I deſire leave to declare, that no* future *enlargements, or alterations, ſhall be ſuffered to depreciate what, with the deepeſt gratitude for their paſt encouragement, I* NOW *commit to the candor of the public.*

It is owing to the delicate deſign, the eloquent pencil, and the ſtill more amiable condeſcenſion, of the very ingenious Dr. WALL, *an eminent phyſician at* Worceſter, *that I am enabled to preſent my readers with the two beautiful and inſtructive* Frontiſpieces.—*And that this work is thus elegantly adorned, without making any other advance in the price, than what unavoidably ariſes from the additional number of ſheets, is owing to the generoſity of my honoured friend,* Sir THOMAS DRURY, Bart. *Who, at his own expence, furniſhed theſe copper-plates, engraved by one of the fineſt*

hands in the kingdom. A favour, which I take a very peculiar ſatisfaction in acknowledging, not only as it is a ſingular honour to the author, and his performance; but as it is alſo a pleaſing and authentic proof, that chriſtianity *has it's* patrons *in the ſuperior ſtations of life: that there are perſons, who think it no diſgrace to their diſtinguiſhed rank and ample fortune, to countenance even the weakeſt attempt, for promoting the intereſts of true religion.*

As for the MONUMENTAL *plate, having conſidered the moſt material circumſtances pretty largely (ſee p. 22, and 23.); I ſhould have added nothing more in this* advertiſement, *had it not been to point out an important* MORAL, *ſuggeſted in the* ARMS *of the two families; not expreſſed in the monument itſelf, but* purpoſely *inſerted in the enſuing draught. —It will on the firſt inſpection be obſerved, that the eſcutcheon is* rent in ſunder, *to intimate the diſſolution of the near relation once ſo* happily *ſubſiſting. The fragments fall to the bottom of the plate, as things comparatively of* very ſmall *conſequence. The motto,* SUBLIMIORA PETAMUS*, *has not only a* ſignificant *reference to the device of the* family arms, *to which it is annexed; but may be conſidered, as ſtanding in a* beautiful *connection with that* celeſtial crown, *placed at the top:—placed at the top, as the* GREAT SUBLIME OBJECT, TO THE PURSUIT OF WHICH *all, who may in* future *generations bear thoſe* ARMS, *and all, who* now *behold them, are by theſe* elevating *words affectionately invited.*

31 MR 64

* LET US PURSUE SUBLIMER OBJECTS.

THE

LIFE

OF THE

Rev. Mr. *James Hervey.*

THIS amiable Chriſtian and excellent Miniſter was born on *Friday* the 26th of *February*, 1713-14, at *Hardingſtone*, a country village, one mile from *Northampton*; his father being then miniſter of the pariſh of *Collingtree*, within two miles of *Hardingſtone*. His firſt inſtruction was from his mother, who taught him his letters, and to read. Under her tuition he continued till he was ſeven years of age; when he was ſent, as a day-ſcholar, to the free grammar-ſchool at *Northampton*.

At this ſchool he remained till he was 17 years old, and learned the *Latin* and *Greek* languages; in which his genius and memory would have enabled him to have made a much earlier progreſs, if it had not been prevented by his ſchoolmaſter, who would not ſuffer him, or any other of his ſcholars, to learn faſter than his own ſon. Whilſt Mr. *Hervey* was at ſchool, though he ſhewed a remarkable dexterity at all the innocent games uſual among children; yet he had an indifference, uncommon among boys, for the acquiſitions he made by them, which he purſued only for exerciſe and amuſement.

In the year 1731, at the age of 17, he was ſent by his father to *Oxford*, and was entered of *Lincoln-College*, under the tuition of the reverend Mr. *Hutchins*. He

reſided in the univerſity ſeven years, yet only took the degree of bachelor of arts. The firſt two or three years he ſpent with ſome degree of indolence, or rather leſs application to his ſtudies than he afterwards uſed. But in 1733, about his 19th year, becoming acquainted with ſome perſons, who began to diſtinguiſh themſelves by their ſerious impreſſions of religion, and their zeal for the promotion of it, he was engaged, by their influence, in a ſtricter attachment both to piety and learning; of the former there are conſpicuous marks in his letters written to his ſiſter, in the years 1733, 1734, and 1735: And of the latter, in the courſe of his labours.

He made himſelf maſter of Dr. *James Keill*'s Anatomy, Dr. *Derham's Phyſico-theology* and *Aſtro-theology*, the *Spectacle de la Nature*, as tranſlated by *Humphreys*; which laſt work he read with a peculiar ſatisfaction. Nor was he leſs delighted by the 'Eſſay on *Pope*'s Odyſſey,' written by the reverend Mr. *Spence*, prebendary of *Durham*; to which elegant and judicious diſcourſe Mr. *Hervey* often acknowledged that he owed more of his improvement in ſtyle and compoſition, than to any other which he had ever read.

In 1734, at the perſuaſion of a much-valued friend, he began to learn the *Hebrew* language, without any teacher, by the *Weſtminſter* Grammar; which, by cloſe application, he made himſelf a complete maſter of.

He had ſtrong prepoſſeſſions againſt the important doctrine of juſtification by faith in the imputed righteouſneſs of *Chriſt*; but they were happily removed, as he acknowledges, in a note on his "Deſcant upon Creation," by reading Mr. *Jenks*'s excellent treatiſe, intitled, "Submiſſion to the Righteouſneſs of God."

He entered into holy orders, as ſoon as his age and the canons of the church would allow. Whilſt he was at *Oxford*, he had a ſmall exhibition of about 20l. a year; and when he was ordained, his father preſſed him very

very much to take ſome curacy, in or near *Oxford*, and to hold his exhibition; but this he would not comply with, it being in his opinion unjuſt to detain it, after he was in orders, from another perſon, who might more want the benefit of that proviſion than himſelf.

In 1736, he left *Oxford*, and became his father's curate. He afterwards went to *London*; and, after ſtaying ſome time there, he accepted the curacy of *Dummer* in *Hampſhire*. Here he continued about twelve months, when he was invited to *Stoke Abbey*, in *Devonſhire*, the ſeat of his worthy friend the late *Paul Orchard*, eſq. who valued him much for his piety, and with whom he lived upwards of two years in great eſteem and friendſhip.

In 1740, he undertook the curacy of *Biddeford*, 14 miles from *Stoke Abbey*, where he lived greatly beloved by the people; his congregation was large, though his ſtipend was ſmall; his friends therefore made a collection yearly for him, which raiſed his income to 60l. a year. At *Biddeford* he was curate about two years and an half, when the rector dying, he was diſmiſſed by the new incumbent, inſenſible of pious or learned excellence, againſt the united requeſt of the pariſhioners, who offered to maintain him at their own expence. During the time that Mr. *Hervey* lived in the weſt, namely, from 1738 to the latter end of 1743, his family heard very little of him, through the greatneſs of the diſtance. He laboured diligently here in the ſervice of his Maſter; and here it was that he planned his "Meditations," and probably wrote ſome part of them.

In 1743, he returned about *Auguſt* to *Weſton-Favell*, and officiated as curate to his father till *June* 1750, at which time his health was much impaired by his great attention to ſtudy and duty; and his family and friends judging that the change of air might be of benefit to him, they formed a deſign, which they executed, of conveying him to *London*, under a pretence of his riding a few

a few miles in the poſt-chaiſe of a friend who was going thither. Of this he pleaſantly complains, in a letter to a friend, upon his arrival there, which begins thus:

"My dear friend,

"If you chide, I muſt accuſe. Pray where was your warrant, where your commiſſion, to impreſs me into this journey? However, as a good chriſtian, I forgive you and your accomplices." After commending ſeveral clergymen his friends, whom he ſaw on the road, he concludes thus: "My animal nature is ſo very feeble, that I find no benefit from the change of air, nor from the enjoyment of the moſt pleaſing ſociety."

He ſtayed in *London* till *April* or *May*, 1752, during which time he was ſeized with a ſevere illneſs, which almoſt coſt him his life; but he recovered, and upon his father's death, which happened in *May* this year, he returned to *Weſton*, where he conſtantly reſided during the remainder of his life. He took his maſter of arts degree at *Cambridge*, in 1752, when he entered at *Clare-Hall*; and as he was of ſufficient ſtanding at *Oxford*, he ſtayed only the few days required by the ſtatutes to perform the univerſity-exerciſe.

It may be thought ſtrange, that he, who had refuſed to hold his exhibition at *Oxford*, along with a curacy, ſhould, upon his father's death, accept of the two livings of *Weſton-Favell* and *Collingtree*, and hold them during his life. It was very far from being his choice, and it was what he had for a long time refuſed to do. But at length, through the earneſt and conſtant intreaties of his family and friends, he was, after much importunity, prevailed on to comply with their requeſts, hoping that he might be thereby enabled to do ſo much the more good. And when he waited upon Dr. *Thomas*, then biſhop of *Peterborough*, for inſtitution to *Collingtree*, which was near ſix months after his induction into *Weſton*, he ſaid, "I ſuppoſe your Lordſhip will be ſurpriſed

priſed to ſee *James Hervey* come to deſire your Lordſhip's permiſſion to be a pluraliſt; but, I aſſure you, I do it in obedience to the repeated ſolicitations of my mother and my ſiſter, and not to pleaſe myſelf;" or to that effect.

His labours, both in his miniſterial office and in his ſtudy, were purſued by him as long as poſſible, under the diſadvantage of a weak conſtitution of body; which, together with the ſeverity of his laſt illneſs, he ſupported not only with the greateſt patience, but without a ſingle expreſſion of peeviſhneſs. That illneſs had long been coming on him; but greatly increaſed in the beginning of *October*, 1758, and grew very formidable in the *December* following. For, on *Sunday* the third of that month, after prayer in his family, he ſeemed to be arreſted by the meſſenger of death; ſo that the united aſſiſtance of his ſiſter and ſervant, with difficulty, enabled him to get up ſtairs into his room, from whence he never came down. His illneſs gaining ground every day, he ſoon became ſenſible of his approaching diſſolution. He had frequent and violent returns of the cramp, which gave him moſt acute pain. He had likewiſe a hectic cough, which afflicted him ſo grievouſly in the night, that he could ſeldom lie in bed till four in the morning *; and was often obliged to riſe at two, eſpecially as opium, how much ſoever guarded by other medicines, would not agree with him.

On the 15th of that month he complained of a pain in his ſide; for which, at his own deſire, he was let blood, though his phyſician Dr. *Stonhouſe*, in whom he placed the greateſt confidence, had objected to it, apprehending him too weak to bear any evacuation of that kind.—When the ſurgeon came, he could ſcarcely find any pulſation, and therefore took away no more than four ounces of blood; intimating to his relations and friends, that

* When Mr. *Hervey* was in tolerable health, he rarely lay in bed after ſix, even in winter; and roſe ſtill earlier in the ſummer.

that the caſe was deſperate, and that he had opened a vein very unwillingly, and merely to ſatisfy Mr. *Hervey*'s deſire, who had ſome hope that the pain might poſſibly be relieved by it.

The reverend Mr. *Abraham Maddock*, his curate, being much with him in the afternoon of that day, Mr. *Hervey* ſpoke to him in ſtrong and pathetic terms of his aſſurance of faith, and of the great love of GOD in CHRIST. "O! (ſaid he) what has CHRIST, how much has CHRIST done for me; and how little have I done for ſo loving a SAVIOUR! If I preached even once a week, it was at laſt a burden to me. I have not viſited the people of my pariſh as I ought to have done; and thus have preached, as it were, from houſe to houſe. I have not taken every opportunity of ſpeaking for CHRIST." Theſe expreſſions being accompanied with tears, which were too viſible not to be obſerved: and leſt his tears ſhould be miſinterpreted, as they had been converſing about his expected end, and of his aſſurance of happineſs, he proceeded thus: "Do not think, that I am afraid to die—I aſſure you, I am not. I know what my SAVIOUR hath done for me; and I want to be gone. But I wonder and lament to think of the love of CHRIST, in doing ſo much for me, and how little I have done for him."

In another converſation, diſcourſing likewiſe of his approaching diſſolution, which he did with the utmoſt calmneſs and ſerenity, and of the little which we know of GOD's word, he ſaid; "How many precious texts are there, big with the moſt rich truths of CHRIST, which we cannot comprehend, which we know nothing of; and of thoſe we do know, how few do we remember? *Bonus textuarius eſt bonus theologus.* 'A good textuary is a good divine;' and that is the armour; the word of GOD is the ſword. Thoſe texts are the weapons which I muſt uſe, when that ſubtle ſpirit, that arch adverſary of mankind, comes to tempt and ſift me in

in my laſt conflict. Surely I had need be well provided with theſe weapons; I had need have my quiver full of them, to anſwer ſatan with texts out of the word of GOD, when he aſſaults me. Thus did CHRIST, when he was tempted in the wilderneſs."

On the 19th, the pains of his body abated, and he grew drowſy and lethargic; but, in the night following, his immediate death was apprehended. The next day he was viſited by Dr. *Stonhouſe*, who declared, that, in his opinion, Mr. *Hervey* could not live above three or four days; upon which he took occaſion to ſpeak of the many conſolations, through *Chriſt*, which a true chriſtian enjoys in the proſpect of death, and of the emptineſs of worldly honours to an immortal ſoul, and of the unprofitableneſs of riches to the irreligious man. Mr. *Hervey* replied, "True, Doctor, true; the only valuable treaſures are in heaven. What would it avail me now to be Archbiſhop of *Canterbury?* Diſeaſe would ſhew no reſpect to my mitre. That prelate [Dr. *Secker*, who died *Auguſt* 3, 1768] is not only very great, but, I am told, has religion really at heart. Yet it is godlineſs, and not grandeur, that will avail him hereafter. The goſpel is offered to me a poor Country-parſon, the ſame as to his Grace. CHRIST makes no difference between us. Oh! why then do miniſters thus neglect the charge of ſo kind a Saviour; fawn upon the great, and hunt after worldly preferments with ſo much eagerneſs, to the diſgrace of our order? Theſe, theſe are the things, Doctor, and not our poverty or obſcurity, which render the clergy ſo juſtly contemptible to the worldlings. No wonder the ſervice of our church, grieved I am to ſay it, is become ſuch a formal lifeleſs thing; ſince it is, alas! too generally executed by perſons dead to godlineſs in all their converſation; whoſe indifference to religion, and worldly-minded behaviour, proclaim the little regard they pay to the doctrines of the Lord who bought them."

Mr.

Mr. *Hervey*, the day before his death, went a few ſteps acroſs his room; but immediately finding his ſtrength failing him, he ſunk rather than fell down; his fall being broken by his ſiſter, who, obſerving his weakneſs, ran and caught him; but he fainted away, and was in all appearance dead, it being a conſiderable time before any pulſe could be perceived. When he came to himſelf, his brother Mr. *William Hervey*, who was come from *London* to viſit him, ſaid, 'We were afraid you was gone.' He anſwered, "I wiſh I had." And well he might wiſh ſo, for his ſtrength was quite exhauſted, his body extremely emaciated, and his bones ſo ſore that he could not bear any one to touch him, when it was neceſſary to move him about; yet, under all this calamity, he was ever praiſing GOD for his mercies; inſomuch that he never received a morſel of lemon to moiſten his mouth, without thanking GOD for his bounty and goodneſs, in creating ſo many helps and refreſhments to a ſick and decaying body: But, eſpecially, did he praiſe GOD for enduing him with patience.

On the 25th of *December*, *Chriſtmas-day*, on which he died, Mr. *Maddock* paying him his morning viſit, Mr. *Hervey* lifted up his head, and opened his eyes, as he ſat in his eaſy chair, (for he could not lie in bed) to ſee who it was, and ſaid, "Sir, I cannot talk with you." He complained much all this day of a great inward conflict which he had, laying his hand upon his breaſt, and ſaying, "Oh! you know not, how great a conflict I have." During this time he almoſt conſtantly lifted up his eyes towards heaven, with his hands claſped together in a praying form, and ſaid, two or three times, "When this great conflict is over, then——" but ſaid no more; though it was underſtood he meant that then he ſhould go to reſt. Dr. *Stonehouſe* came to him about three hours before he expired. Mr. *Hervey* urged ſtrongly and affectionately to the Doctor the importance and care of his everlaſting concerns, and intreated him not

to

to be over-charged with *the cares of this life*, but to attend, amidſt the multiplicity of his buſineſs, to the *one thing needful:*

'Which done, the pooreſt can no wants endure;
'And which not done, the richeſt muſt be poor.' *Pope.*

Mr. *Hervey* uſed frequently to repeat theſe lines with ſuch an emphaſis and ſignificant look, as conveyed their important meaning in a manner the moſt ſenſible and affecting.

The Doctor, ſeeing the great difficulty and pain with which he ſpoke, (for he was almoſt ſuffocated with phlegm and frequent vomitings), and finding, by his pulſe, that the pangs of death were then coming on, deſired, that he would ſpare himſelf. "No, (ſaid he) Doctor, no; you tell me I have but a few moments to live: O! let me ſpend them in adoring our great REDEEMER." He then repeated the 26th verſe of the 73d *Pſalm*; *Though my fleſh and my heart fail, yet GOD is the ſtrength of my heart, and my portion for ever:* And he expatiated in a moſt ſtriking manner on theſe words of St. *Paul*, 1 *Cor.* iii. 22, 23. *All things are your's; life and death; for ye are Chriſt's.* At the ſame time referring them to this paſſage in Dr. *Doddridge*'s Family Expoſitor, where it is illuſtrated in a very inſtructive manner. "Here (ſays he) is the treaſure of a chriſtian. Death is reckoned among this inventory; and a noble treaſure it is. How thankful am I for death, as it is the paſſage through which I paſs to the Lord and Giver of eternal life; and as it frees me from all this miſery you now ſee me endure, and which I am willing to endure, as long as GOD thinks fit; for I know, he will by and by, in his own good time, diſmiſs me from the body. Theſe *light afflictions are but for a moment*, and then comes *an eternal weight of glory*. O! welcome, welcome death!—Thou mayeſt well be reckoned among the treaſures of the chriſtian. *To live is Chriſt, but to die is gain.*" After which, as the Doctor was taking his final

leave of him, Mr. *Hervey* expreſſed great gratitude for his viſits, though it had been long out of the power of medicines to cure him. He then pauſed a little, and with great ſerenity and ſweetneſs in his countenance, though the pangs of death were upon him, being raiſed a little in his chair, repeated theſe words; "*Lord, now letteſt thou thy ſervant depart in peace, according to thy* moſt holy and comfortable *word*; *for mine eyes have ſeen thy* precious *ſalvation*. Here, Doctor, is my cordial! What are all the cordials given to ſupport the dying, in compariſon of that which ariſes from the promiſes of ſalvation by *Chriſt*?—This, this ſupports me." About three o'clock, he ſaid, "The great conflict is over—Now all is done." After which he ſcarce ſpoke any other words intelligibly, except now and then, "precious ſalvation."

During the laſt hour he ſaid nothing, but leaned his head againſt the ſide of an eaſy chair, and, without a ſigh, groan, ſtruggle, or the leaſt emotion, he ſhut his eyes and departed, between four and five in the afternoon, on *Chriſtmas-day*, 1758, in the 45th year of his age.

When his body was conveyed to church, it was covered, by his expreſs deſire, with the poor's pall, and he was buried under the middle of the communion-table in the chancel of *Weſton-Favell*, on *Friday* the 28th of *December*, in the preſence of a numerous congregation, full of regret for the loſs of ſo excellent a paſtor.—Mr. *Maddock*, who buried him, was himſelf in tears.—Some were wringing their hands, others ſobbing, many were ſilently weeping, but all were inwardly and ſincerely grieved, as their looks ſufficiently teſtified; all bearing a viſible witneſs of his worth, and their ſorrow.

His character, both in his public and private capacity, was of the moſt-exemplary kind.—As a miniſter, he performed all the duties of that office with the greateſt ſtrictneſs. In the pulpit he was earneſt and fervent, and

and ſhewed that he felt the efficacy of what he preached. Nor did he think it ſufficient to preach on the *Lord's-day* only, but ſet up a weekly lecture every *Wedneſday* evening, at *Weſton-Favell* church, which was very well attended. This lecture was held during the winter half year at ſeven, as it did not then interfere with the work of the labouring people; and he illuminated the church out of his own pocket.

The laſt two or three years of his life he could ſcarce do any thing more than preach once on the *Lord's-day*, when people from many miles round flocked to hear him. His *Wedneſday* evening lecture at ſeven he diſcontinued for the laſt year. *Collingtree*, which, like *Weſton-Favell*, was a family-living, about five miles diſtance, Mr. *Hervey* had not been able for ſome time to preach at, or to viſit his pariſhioners at their own houſes, as his cuſtom had been; but he encouraged them to come to him, and to converſe freely on the ſubjects relating to their eternal intereſts.

He always preached without notes, except on ſome very particular occaſions; but his method was judicious, clear, and not encumbered with too many ſubdiviſions. His weakneſs rendering him for ſeveral months before his death incapable of ſpeaking to his congregation as uſual, he ſhortened his diſcourſes, and took a moſt uſeful method of inculcating his inſtructions: After he had expounded his text, and divided his ſermon into two heads, (rarely into more, and never exceeding three), he would ſpeak briefly, and at the concluſion of each head enforce what he had ſaid, by a pertinent text of ſcripture, deſiring his congregation (which was generally very numerous) to turn to their Bibles, and double down that text. "Now, (added he) my dear brethren, if you forget my ſermon, you cannot forget GOD's word in this text, unleſs you wilfully throw your Bibles aſide. Shew theſe to your children, or the abſent part of your family, when you return home." Then he gave a ſtri-

king exhortation, and at the end of it another text for them to double down; ſo that they had always three texts; in order to their finding of which, he pauſed in the pulpit two or three minutes.

He endeavoured as much as poſſible to diveſt himſelf in his public diſcourſes of his uſual luxuriancy of ſtile, and to adapt his language to the loweſt capacity: And his method of catechizing children in church, and of ſpeaking to them in private, was very engaging and uſeful.

He did not forget that he was a miniſter in his own houſe; for he worſhipped GOD with his family twice a day. He ſupped at eight every night, and at nine he expounded a text of ſcripture for about a quarter of an hour, and ſeldom longer, except when ſome friend was preſent, to whom he thought his diſcourſe might be uſeful, or when particularly requeſted to enlarge. After this he concluded with prayer.

He breakfaſted at nine: About eight he called his family together, and required each of his ſervants to repeat by heart the text which he had explained the preceding evening, and then he would recapitulate his expoſition: By which method, both his text and commentary were imprinted on their memories. After this he had prayers.

In the afternoon, when he was called down to tea, he uſed to bring his *Hebrew* Bible or *Greek* Teſtament with him, and would ſpeak (as he was ever ſtudious how he might promote the glory of GOD, and improve time) either upon one or more verſes, as occaſion offered, in the moſt inſtructive and entertaining manner.

In the exerciſe of his charity, Mr. *Hervey* choſe to clothe the poor rather than to give them money; and he would get ſome judicious perſon to buy linen, coarſe cloth, ſtockings, ſhoes, *&c.* for them at the beſt hand; alleging that the poor could not purchaſe on ſuch good terms what they wanted at the little ſhops, and with

ſmall

ſmall ſums of money. "I am (ſaid he) GOD's ſteward for the poor, and I muſt huſband the little pittance I have to beſtow upon them, and make it go as far as poſſible." But when money would be really ſerviceable to a family, as to a prudent houſekeeper, diſtreſſed by ſickneſs or misfortunes, he would give five or more guineas at a time; taking care that it ſhould not be known whence the money came.

He was particularly deſirous of getting the advice of a phyſician (or at leaſt ſome judicious apothecary) for the ſick poor; and was ever ready to procure them the very beſt medicines.—A moſt beneficial ſort of charity to mankind; and in which it were to be wiſhed he had many imitators.—He would frequently petition ſuch phyſicians of his acquaintance in different parts of the kingdom, as he apprehended thus charitably diſpoſed, to give their advice occaſionally, when they rode thro' a town, to ſuch poor creatures as the clergyman of the place, or ſome ſubſtantial inhabitants, ſhould recommend as real objects of compaſſion.—Mr. *Hervey* would then with great pleaſure, and with as much gratitude to the phyſician, as if done to himſelf, defray the expence of what medicines were wanted.

He gave away a great number of good books, with ſuitable inſtructions for their uſe; and eſpecially Bibles. In the blank leaf he frequently wrote ſomething capable of making an impreſſion, or elſe ſtuck in a printed paper, relating to the promiſes of GOD, in and through *Jeſus Chriſt*, or to creation, preſervation, and redemption *.

All the future profits of his works he has left to ſome of the charitable uſes above ſpecified, except his "Meditations;" the copy of which he had ſold, after it had paſſed through ſeveral editions; which ſale of the copy, and the profits of the former impreſſions, amounted to about ſeven hundred pounds; all which he gave away in

* See a copy of this printed paper among his "Tracts."

charity. He ſaid, that it was devoted to GOD, and that he would on no account apply it to worldly uſes; that he wrote not for profit or fame, but to ſerve the cauſe of GOD; and as Providence had bleſſed his attempt, he thought himſelf bound to relieve the diſtreſſes of his fellow-creatures with it.

In any expence relating to himſelf, he was very frugal, that he might be liberal to others; and it was always his deſire to die juſt even with the world. "I will be my own executor," ſaid he. And as he died on *Chriſtmas-day*, his fund expired almoſt with his life. What little remained, he deſired might be given in warm cloathing to the poor in that ſevere ſeaſon.

In learning he was inferior to few. *Greek* was almoſt as familiar to him as his native language. He was a great maſter of the claſſics; and in the younger part of his life had written ſome copies of verſes, which ſhewed no contemptible genius for poetry. He had a critical knowledge of the *Hebrew* tongue, and delighted in it. With reſpect to his private capacity, he was never known to be in a paſſion. No worldly concerns (though he ſometimes met with very trying ones) ever affected him. His humility rendered him invulnerable.—When he was miſrepreſented and calumniated, he would ſay, "Our enemies are ſometimes our beſt friends, and tell us truths; and then we ſhould amend our faults, and be thankful for ſuch information: And if what they ſay be not true, and only ſpoke through malice, then ſuch perſons are to be conſidered as diſeaſed in their minds, and that he would pray for them. They are to be pitied, ſays he, and I might as juſtly be angry with a man who is diſeaſed in body." In his ordinary tranſactions with others, he was ever chearful, punctual, juſt, and candid, to perſons of every denomination. He frequently wrote religious letters to his acquaintance according to their different circumſtances, in the moſt amiable and convincing manner.

The

The reverend Mr. *Romaine*, in an excellent ſermon preached upon his death, ſays of Mr. *Hervey*, "That he had an excellency, which he never ſaw in ſo great a degree in any other perſon. Mr. *Hervey* never let an opportunity ſlip of ſpeaking of the love of *Chriſt*. He would take occaſion from the moſt common incident, and yet it would not appear forced; for he had a wonderful talent of ſpiritualizing and improving things. This heart-love to GOD appeared evidently in every part of his character. As a miniſter, his faith wrought in love to the ſouls of men in all the offices of his function. He did not forget that he was a miniſter in his own houſe; for he called his family together twice a day to ſerve GOD. As a member of ſociety, his faith wrought abundantly by love to his neighbour; for he was full of good works. His charities to the poor were very large; and that he might be liberal to them, he was very frugal in his own expences. Mr. *Hervey* walked cloſe after *Chriſt*, and found that the belief of *Chriſt*'s righteouſneſs being imputed to him for his juſtification, was ſo far from being a licentious doctrine, that it inſpired him with the nobleſt motives to a grateful obedience: His holy life was an excellent recommendation of his principles. GOD had enriched him with great gifts, and with great graces, and had made him humble; for he was humbled by the power of grace. He had been a very vain proud young man, but the grace of GOD emptied him of pride and ſelf, and clothed him with humility. Having put on *Chriſt*, he had put on with him the ornament of a meek and quiet ſpirit; which appeared in his great patience and reſignation to the will of GOD."

His writings afford a laſting and indiſputable proof of his grace and abilities. Theſe were given him for the uſe of the church of GOD; and they were laid out for that end. His ſtile has been much admired. It muſt be

be owned, that there is much of brilliancy and floridneſs in all his compoſitions: But perſons of refined taſte have expreſſed themſelves much leſs ſatisfied with his language than his thoughts. The nervous, chaſte and manly ſtile of the ancient claſſics he certainly has not copied; but rather that laboured attention to words and turns, which has been objected to in *Seneca*, *Auſtin*, and others, However, this is but of ſmall importance, compared with the heavenly truths he delivered, and the ſeraphic ardor with which he has delivered them. The caſket indeed is brilliant, and carefully brilliant; but 'tis the jewel within, that renders the whole invaluable.

His WORKS. "I. Meditations and Contemplations; in two volumes. Theſe had a prodigious ſale, and have been much bleſſed to all ranks among us. II. *Theron* and *Aſpaſio*; in three volumes. Theſe contain dialogues upon many divine truths, and particularly upon juſtification by the imputed righteouſneſs of *Chriſt*. III. A Collection of his Letters; in two vols. publiſhed after his death. Theſe are eminently pious and valuable, and throw great light upon the courſe of his life. IV. Sermons and religious Tracts; compriſed in one ſmall volume. V. Eleven Letters to the reverend Mr. *John Weſley*; in anſwer to his Remarks upon *Theron* and *Aſpaſio*. Theſe are highly excellent, and ſhew the mild and gracious ſpirit of their Author under an attack that does but too little honour to him that made it. VI. Letters to Lady *Frances Shirley*; in one ſmall volume; with a recommendatory preface by the reverend Mr. *Romaine*. VII. Three Poſthumous Sermons, publiſhed by the reverend Mr. *Toplady*. And, VIII. Sermons on the Trinity, Repentance, Scriptures, and the Love of GOD, publiſhed from his Manuſcripts, 1779.

TO

TO

Miſs R---- T-----.

MADAM,

THESE reflections, the one on the *deepeſt*, the other on the *gayeſt* ſcenes of nature; when they proceeded privately from the *pen*, were addreſſed to a lady of the moſt valuable endowments. Who crowned all her other endearing qualities, by a fervent love of CHRIST, and an exemplary conformity to his divine pattern. She, alas! lives no longer on earth; unleſs it be in the honours of a diſtinguiſhed character, and in the bleeding remembrance of her acquaintance.

It is impoſſible, Madam, to wiſh you a richer bleſſing, or a more ſubſtantial happineſs, than that the ſame ſpirit of unfeigned *faith*, the ſame courſe of undefiled *religion*, which have enabled her to triumph over death, may both animate and adorn your life. And you will permit me to declare, that my chief inducement in requeſting your acceptance of the following Meditations, now they make a public appearance from the *preſs*, is, that they are deſigned to cultivate the ſame ſacred *principle*, and to promote the ſame excellent *practice*.

Long, Madam, may you bloom in all the vivacity and amiableneſs of youth, like the charming

ſubject

ſubject of one of theſe Contemplations. But at the ſame time remember, that, with regard to ſuch inferior accompliſhments, you muſt one day *fade*, (may it prove ſome very remote period!) like the mournful objects of the other. This conſideration will prompt you to go on, as you have begun, in adding the *meekneſs* of *wiſdom*, and all the *beauties* of *holineſs*, to the graces of an engaging perſon, and the refinements of a polite education.

And might—O! might the enſuing hints furniſh you with the leaſt aſſiſtance, in proſecuting ſo deſirable an end; might they contribute, in any degree, to eſtabliſh your faith, or elevate your devotion; they, would, then, adminiſter to the author ſuch a ſatisfaction, as applauſe cannot give, nor cenſure take away: a ſatisfaction, which I ſhould be able to enjoy, even in thoſe awful moments, when all that captivates the eye is ſinking in darkneſs, and every glory of this lower world diſappearing for ever.

Theſe wiſhes, Madam, as they are a moſt agreeable employ of my thoughts, ſo they come attended with this additional circumſtance of pleaſure, that they are alſo the ſincereſt expreſſion of that very great eſteem, with which I am,

31 MR 64

MADAM,

Your moſt Obedient,

Moſt Humble Servant,

Weſton-Favell, near Northampton, May 20, 1746.

JAMES HERVEY.

PREFACE.

THE first of these occasional Meditations, begs leave to remind my readers of their latter end; *and would invite them to set, not their houses only, but, which is inexpressibly more needful, their souls, in order: that they may be able, through all the intermediate stages, to look forward upon their approaching exit, without any* anxious apprehensions: *and, when the great change commences, may bid adieu to terrestrial things, with all the* calmness *of a chearful resignation, with all the* comforts *of a well-grounded faith.*

The other attempts to sketch out some little traces of the All-sufficiency *of our* Redeemer, *for the grand and gracious purposes of everlasting Salvation. That a sense of his unutterable dignity, and infinite perfections, may incite us to regard him, with sentiments of the most profound* veneration; *to long for an assured interest in his merits, with all the ardency of* desire; *and to trust in his powerful Mediation, with an* affiance *not to be shaken by any temptations, not to be shared with any performances of our own.*

I flatter myself, that the thoughts conceived among the tombs, *may be welcome to the* serious *and* humane *mind. Because, as there are few, who have not consigned the remains of some dear* relations, *or honoured* friends, *to those silent repositories; so there are none, but*

but muſt be ſenſible, that this is the houſe appointed for all living; *and that they themſelves, are ſhortly to remove into the ſame ſolemn manſions.—And who would not turn aſide, for a while, from the moſt favourite amuſements, to view the* place, *where his once-loved* companions *lie? Who would not ſometimes ſurvey thoſe* appartments, *where he* himſelf *is to take up an* abode, *till time ſhall be no more?*

As to the other little Eſſay, may I not humbly preſume, that the very ſubject itſelf will recommend the remarks? For, who is not delighted with the proſpect of the blooming creation, and even charmed with the delicate attractions *of flowers? Who does not covet to aſſemble them in the garden, or wear them in a noſegay? Since this is a paſſion ſo univerſal, who would not be willing to render it productive of the ſublimeſt improvement?—This piece of* holy frugality, *I have ventured to ſuggeſt, and endeavoured to exemplify, in the ſecond letter; that, while the hand is cropping the tranſient beauties of a flower, the attentive mind may be enriching itſelf with ſolid and laſting good.—And I cannot but entertain ſome pleaſing hopes, that the niceſt taſte may receive and reliſh* religious impreſſions, *when they are conveyed by ſuch* lovely monitors; *when the inſtructive leſſons are found, not on the leaves of ſome formidable* folio, *but ſtand legible on the fine* ſarcenet *of a* narciſſus; *when they ſavour not of the* lamp *and* recluſe, *but come breathing from the fragrant boſom of a* jonquil.

31 MR 64

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THE

CONTENTS.

MEDITATIONS AMONG THE TOMBS.

OCCASION of the Meditations, 1. Solitary walk in a church, 2. Handſome altar-piece; gratitude celebrated, 3. Solomon's temple; his noble ſentiment at the dedication, 3, 4; the paſſage illuſtrated, 4. The Holy Ghoſt dwelling in our hearts; a rich privilege; an obligation to holineſs, 5, 6. The floor covered with funeral inſcriptions, 6. Wiſdom of meditating on our latter end, 7. Promiſcuous lodgment, and amicable agreement of corpſes, ſuggeſt humility, and concord, 8. Monument of an infant; it's fortunate circumſtances; ſuperior felicity of ſurvivors, 9. Monument of a youth; grief of the parents; mitigated or aggravated by the proſpect of the inviſible ſtate; exhortation to educate children religiouſly, 11. Monument of a young man; cut off in his prime; how unexpected and afflictive the ſtroke; the frailty of all ſublunary happineſs, 13. Reflection on the three preceding exits; the uncertainty of life; call to be always ready, 16. This farther urged from the inſtance of a perſon killed by a misfortune; nothing caſual, but all ordered by providence, 17. Caſe of a lady, who died in childbed; her character: with regard to earthly things, we know not what is really deſirable, or truly good: remarks on Mrs. STONHOUSE's monument, in the great church at *Northampton*, 21. A religious father taken from his young family; his behaviour on a dying bed; their ſupport in a fatherleſs ſtate, 26.

Monument of a middle-aged perſon; immerſed in buſineſs; diſappointment of his ſchemes; his dying acknowledgments; the folly of worldly-mindedneſs; very bitterneſs in the end, 30. The graves of the aged; the difficulties and hazard of a late repentance; youth intreated to enter upon a courſe of holineſs without delay, 32. The ſingular wiſdom and felicity of the righteous; the reſt of their bodies; the calmneſs of their departure; the ſafety of their diſembodied ſouls; their delightful ſituation till the judgment-day, 34, 35. Monument of a warrior, ſlain in battle; reflections on the death of CHRIST, that it was voluntary, foreſeen, undergone for enemies; was moſt torturous, lingering, and ignominious, 39. The meanneſs of being obliged to a monument for perpetuating our names: author's wiſh for himſelf; true method of eternizing our characters, 42. The vault; it's awful aſpect; grandeur in abaſement; the vanity of pleaſures, honours and riches, 44. The clock ſtrikes; a warning to redeem the time, 48. The wonderful change which takes place in the tomb, diſplayed in ſeveral particulars, 49. Soliloquy of a lover; admonition to the ladies; true beauty of the fair ſex, 50. Sin the cauſe of our diſſolution, 52. Subject of mortality brought home to our own caſe; incitement to improve life; this the beſt embalming, 53. View of our Saviour's ſepulchre; his lying in the grave has ſoftened it for his people: faith in his dying love diſarms death, 56. The reſurrection of the righteous; their meeting the judge; their acceptance at the great tribunal, 58. Sickneſs, ſin, and death, deſtroyed; bliſs or miſery unchangeable; obſervation on eternity, 60. The wicked; the anguiſh of their laſt ſickneſs. No hope but from the religion they deſpiſed; that very precarious; the horror of their diſſolution; this the beginning of ſorrows; their treatment in the inviſible world; reſerved to the judgment of the great day, 62. They riſe, though reluctant; are diſtracted with terror; covered with contempt; condemned to endleſs woe, 65. To be inſtrumental in ſaving our fellow-creatures from this miſery, the trueſt exerciſe of benevolence, 67. A reflection on the vaſt importance of theſe truths; a perſuaſive to act under the believing

ing conſideration of them; enforced by the inexpreſſible neceſſity of preparing for them, 68. The whole cloſes with a view of the preſent ſecurity, and future glory, of the righteous, 69.

REFLECTIONS ON A FLOWER-GARDEN.

WALK in the garden; ſummer morning; a ſoaring lark; invitation to early riſing, 71. Vaſtneſs of the heavens, greater extent of divine mercy, 73. The ſun; it's riſing glories; emblem of CHRIST, in it's enlightening, fructifying, chearing, and extenſive influences, 74. Dews; their tranſient brightneſs; their refreſhing nature; their immenſe number: difficult paſſage in the pſalms cleared up, 80. The various, but harmonious, procedure of providence and grace, 84. View of the country, and it's principal productions; particularly of an orchard, and kitchen-garden; chiefly characterized as uſeful, 85. CHRIST made and recovered, upholds and actuates all; addreſs to mankind on this occaſion, 89. Obſervations contracted to the garden; fields of literature left for the ſtudy of the bible, 95. Fragrance of flowers; it's fugitive nature, another motive to ſhake off ſloth; the delightful ſenſation it creates, faint repreſentation of CHRIST's ſacrifice; all our performances polluted, this the cauſe of our acceptance, 97. Colours of flowers, how perfect in every kind; with what ſkill diſpoſed; fineneſs of the flowery texture: inducement to truſt in providence, 99. The folly of pride in dreſs; our true ornaments diſplayed, 101. Flowers naturally inſpire delight; what pleaſure muſt ariſe from the beatific viſion, 103. Solomon pictures out the bleſſed JESUS by the moſt delicate flowers; beauties in the creature lead us to the Creator, 105. Diverſity of flowers, in their airs, habits, attitudes, and lineaments; wiſdom of the Almighty Maker; the perfection and ſimplicity of his operations, 106. Difference between individuals of the ſame ſpecies; emblem of the ſmaller differences among proteſtants, 110. Regular ſucceſſion of flowers; ſome of the chief ſets deſcribed; pleaſing effects produced by this œconomy; a benevolent providence apparent in

conducting it, 111. This beautiful diſpoſition, and all that is admirable in the creation, referred to CHRIST as the author; to conſider the things that are made, in this view, has excellent influence on our faith and love, 114. The ſtructure of flowers ſo correct, could not be altered, but to their prejudice; the time of their appearing, choſen with the niceſt precaution: theſe circumſtances, a ſtriking argument for reſignation to the diſpoſals of heaven, 118. Quotations from *Caſimir* and *Juvenal* tranſlated, 119, 120. A favourite tenet of Mr. *Pope*'s rightly ſtated, 121. The brute creatures unaffected with flowers: their fine qualities peculiarly intended to delight mankind: all things conſtituted with a particular regard to our advantage; this, an endearing obligation to gratitude; but a more engaging motive is the gift of an immortal ſoul, 122. Remark on the notion of a great poet, 125. The cultivated garden, an image of a well-nurtured mind; addreſs to perſons concerned in the education of youth, 128. Flowers in the bud, figurative of a niggard; flowers in full expanſion, expreſſive of a benevolent diſpoſition, 131. Sun-flower, it's remarkable attachment to the ſun; ſuch ſhould be our adherence to the Saviour, 132. Paſſion-flower; it's deſcription; with a religious improvement, 134. Senſitive plant; ſhrinks from every touch; ſuch ſhould be our ſolicitous care to avoid ſin, 137, 138. The delicacy of flowers, and coarſeneſs of their roots; the ennobling change of our bodies at the reſurrection; this ſhould reconcile us to the thoughts of diſſolution, 140. Paſſage from *Theocritus*; the perfections of flowers ſoon decay; the charms of complexion ſcarce more laſting, 142. Inſtances of tranſitory continuance in the nobleſt flowers: the honours of the future ſtate unfading, 143. All the delights of the flowery ſeaſon paſs away; the celeſtial entertainments know no end, 145. Not flowers only, but the moſt durable things in nature, are periſhing; their felicity ſtable, who have GOD for their portion, 146. Retreat into an arbour; practice of St. *Auguſtine*, pattern for our imitation, 147. Coolneſs of this ſhady ſituation; the inſufferable heat that rages abroad; our ſafety in all the dangers of life, and amidſt the terrors of eternal judgment, if ſheltered by the Redeemer's protection, and intereſted in his merits, *ibid.*

The

The bees; their ingenuity; their induſtry; ſet an example for the author, 149. A diſtant proſpect of the whole ſcene, with it's various decorations, reminds the beholder of heaven; it's glories not to be deſcribed, but moſt paſſionately deſired, 150.

A DESCANT UPON CREATION.

DESIGN of the whole. Angels. The viſible heavens. Stars. Comets. Planets. Sun. Moon. Thunders. Lightenings. Clouds, wintry and vernal. Rainbow. Storms and tempeſts. Peſtilence. Heat and cold. Ocean. Wood and ſhrubs. Vine and fruit-trees. Meadows and fields. Mines and jewels. Fountains and rivers. Birds. Bees. Silkworm. Cattle, and creatures in every element. General chorus of praiſe.

CONTEMPLATIONS ON THE NIGHT.

A Delightful evening walk; the unmoleſted enjoyment of ſuch pleaſures owing to our late victory over the rebels, 189, &c. The ſetting ſun, 192. Twilight; it's uſefulneſs; ſerious conſideration, 193. The dewy coolneſs; it's beneficial influence on nature; returns of ſolitude equally uſeful to man, 195. Angels our ſpectators; GOD ever preſent: comfortable improvement of this truth, 197. The day ended; the ſwiftneſs, the ſhortneſs of time; the work to be done while it laſts; to ſquander it away, the moſt deſtructive extravagance, 199. The profound ſilence, 204. Univerſal ceſſation of buſineſs, 205. The variations of nature, pleaſing and advantageous, 208. Darkneſs; the obliging manner of it's taking place; wild beaſts of the deſart, and ſavages in human ſhape, make uſe of this opportunity, 209. Darkneſs renders the leaſt ſpark viſible; yet ſteals from our ſight all the lovely diſtinctions of things, 212. Sleep; it's chearing nature; the gift of heaven: fine preparatives for it's approach; the kindneſs of providence in guarding our ſlumbers, 214.

Dreams; their unaccountable oddneſs; many peoples waking thoughts, no leſs chimerical, 218. A very ſingular, and very happy circumſtance, attending ſleep and dreams, 220. Ghoſts; our unreaſonable timorouſneſs on this occaſion; the true object of fear; the reality and deſign of apparitions, deducted from a paſſage in *Job*, 222. The owl; it's gloomy diſpoſition; unholy perſons incapable of reliſhing the delights of heaven, 226, 227. Owl ſcreaming, ſuppoſed to be a token of death; the many real preſages of this great change; due preparation pointed out, and preſſed, 228. The Nightingale; her charming ſong; entertains the lovers of retirement; how to have a ſweeter melody in our own breaſts, 231. The very different circumſtances of mankind, particularly of the gay, and the afflicted; addreſs to the devotees of mirth and ſenſuality, 232. The glow-worm, and ignus fatuus; the pleaſures of the world, and powers of uninlightened reaſon, 232. A comet; imagined to be the forerunner of judgments; licentiouſneſs abounding in a nation, a much more formidable omen; the diſtemper among the cattle, 236. Northern lights; the panic they occaſion; the general conflagration, 239. The moon riſing; brightens as ſhe advances; ſuch ſhould be our moral conduct, 242. Moon opens a majeſtic ſcene; how worthy our admiration, 243. Moon, a moſt ſerviceable appendage to our globe, 244. Moon, ſhines with derivative light; chriſtians receive their all from their Saviour, 245. Moon always varying; the things of this world liable to perpetual viciſſitudes; our own righteouſneſs unequal and imperfect, our Redeemer's complete, and always the ſame, 247. Moon, under an eclipſe, gazed at by multitudes; the faults of eminent perſons ſeldom eſcape obſervation, 251. Moon reflected by the ocean; the virtues of perſons, in diſtinguiſhed ſtations, influential on others, 252. Moon actuates the ſea; the everlaſting joys of heaven attract and refine the affections, 253. Prayer a reaſonable ſervice; praiſe a delightful duty; with devout recollections proper for the night, 254.

CON-

CONTEMPLATIONS ON THE STARRY HEAVENS.

WALK on the ſummit of a hill. The advancing night withdraws the rural proſpect; opens the beauties of the ſky, 259. Fragrance of the blooming beans, 260. The heavens, a noble field for the diſplay of the divine perfections, 261. Folly of judicial aſtrology; right uſe of contemplating the ſtars, 262. A ſketch of the moſt remarkable diſcoveries in our modern aſtronomy, 263, &c. Religion, and neceſſary buſineſs; religion, and innocent pleaſure, as conſiſtent, as the annual and diurnal motions of the earth, 264. The ſun, it's enormous ſize, 266. Stars, the centres of ſyſtems; their inconceivable diſtance, 267. Other ſkies, furniſhed with other ſtars, 268. The greatneſs of the Creator, 269. The preceding obſervations inculcate humility, 270. Shew the littleneſs of terreſtrial things, *ibid.* The ſtupendous condeſcenſion of GOD, in his gracious regards to the children of men, 271. The prodigious heinouſneſs of human guilt, 274. The richneſs of CHRIST's atonement, and it's complete ſufficiency for the moſt deplorable caſes of ſin and miſery, 276. The power of GOD manifeſted in the ſtarry heavens; this the Chriſtian's conſtant ſafeguard, and ſure reſource, 279. The miſerable condition of the ungodly, who have omnipotence for their enemy, 283. The unwearied patience of this almighty being, 284. The wiſdom of GOD, diſplayed in the ſkies; ſubmiſſion to his diſpenſations, even when they ſeem moſt frowning and ſevere; all ſprings from love, and will terminate in good, 285. The goodneſs of GOD, diffuſed through the vaſt ſyſtem of created things; but far more illuſtriouſly exemplified in the work of redemption; the former view gives a moſt amiable, the latter a perfectly raviſhing idea of the divine beneficence, 289. The purity of GOD, faintly repreſented by the unſpotted firmament: the defilement of ſinful man; the immaculate excellence of his Surety, 295. The unmeaſurable demenſions of the ſky; the greater extent of the divine bounty and mercy; the laſt of theſe ſubjects, being ſo peculiarly comfortable to ſinners, conſidered ſomewhat copiouſly,

ouſly, 299. What ſuſtains the arch of heaven, and ſupports the globes it contains; the ſame inviſible hand upholds the chriſtian in his courſe, 306. The faithfulneſs of GOD pourtrayed, in the ſtability of the heavenly bodies, and perpetuity of their motions; the unreaſonableneſs of our unbelief; motives to an aſſured faith, 309. Various attributes of the Divine nature appear, with a glimmering light, in the celeſtial luminaries; all ſhine forth, with the fulleſt luſtre, in CHRIST JESUS, 312. The dignity of prayer, and happineſs of having GOD for our portion, 317. The horrible ingratitude, and deſtructive perverſeneſs, of living without GOD in the world, 319. All the rolling worlds on high, punctually obedient to their Maker's orders; are a pattern, in this reſpect, and a provocative to the rational creation, 322. The gradual appearance of ſtars; and progreſſive ſtate of a true converſion, 325. The multitude of ſtars; eſpecially in the galaxy; the more attentively ſurveyed, the greater number diſcovered; this applied to the unſearchable treaſures of wiſdom in the ſcriptures, of merit in CHRIST, of bliſs in heaven, 326. The celeſtial bodies diſpoſed in ſuch a manner, as to be delightful and ſerviceable to man; adorn his abode, and meaſure his time; a ſilent admonition this, to improve the talent, 329. Brightneſs of the ſtars; encouragement to fidelity in the miniſterial office, 331. Polar ſtar; it's invariable ſituation; guide to the ancient mariners; ſuch the word of GOD to our ſouls; perſuaſive to follow it's unerring dictates, *ibid.* Variety in the magnitude, and ſplendor of the ſtars; different degrees in the world of glory; yet all the bleſſed completely happy, 333. Projection and attraction, the grand principles that actuate the planetary ſyſtem; faith and love bear much the ſame proportion, in the œconomy of chriſtianity, 335. The admirable effects, and extenſive influences, of attraction; the agency of the HOLY GHOST on the human mind, 337. Vaſt gradation in the ſcale of beings; all are objects of the divine care, and full of the divine preſence, 340. The ſurpaſſing worth of an immortal ſoul; a ſolicitude for it's final welfare urged, 345. An unthinking view of the ſkies is affecting; much more a rational and devout one, 346. The ſcantineſs of our knowledge, with regard to the celeſtial

tial bodies; after all our ſearch, they are objects of admiration, rather than of ſcience; exhortation to ſuch purſuits, as are of eaſy attainment, and will be of everlaſting advantage, 347. Short recapitulation of the whole; and an hymn of praiſe, ſuited to the occaſion, 349, 350.

N. B. It may ſeem unaccountable to an *unlearned* reader that Aſtronomers ſhould ſpeak ſuch amazing things; and ſpeak them with ſuch an air of *aſſurance*; concerning the diſtances and magnitudes, the motions and relations, of the heavenly bodies. I would deſire ſuch a perſon to conſider the caſe of *ECLIPSES*, and with what *exactneſs* they are calculated. They are not only foretold, but the very inſtant of their *beginning* is determined. The preciſe time of their *continuance* is aſſigned; aſſigned, almoſt to the *nicety* of a moment; and, what is ſtill more ſurpriſing, for the ſpace of *hundreds* or *thouſands* of years to come.—As this is a matter of fact, abſolutely indiſputable; it is alſo a very obvious, yet ſolid demonſtration, that the principles of ſcience, on which thoſe calculations proceed, are not mere conjecture, or precarious ſuppoſition; but have a *real*, a *certain foundation*, in the nature and conſtitution of things.

A WINTER-PIECE.

INTRODUCTION—Shortneſs of the winter's day—Inceſſant rain, producing a flood—Tempeſt; it's effects; at land, by ſea—Pitchy darkneſs; riding in it—Thick rime—Keen froſt, and ſerenity of weather—Severe cold, and piercing winds—Deep ſnow—General thaw—Ever-greens—Storm of hail—Rainbow.

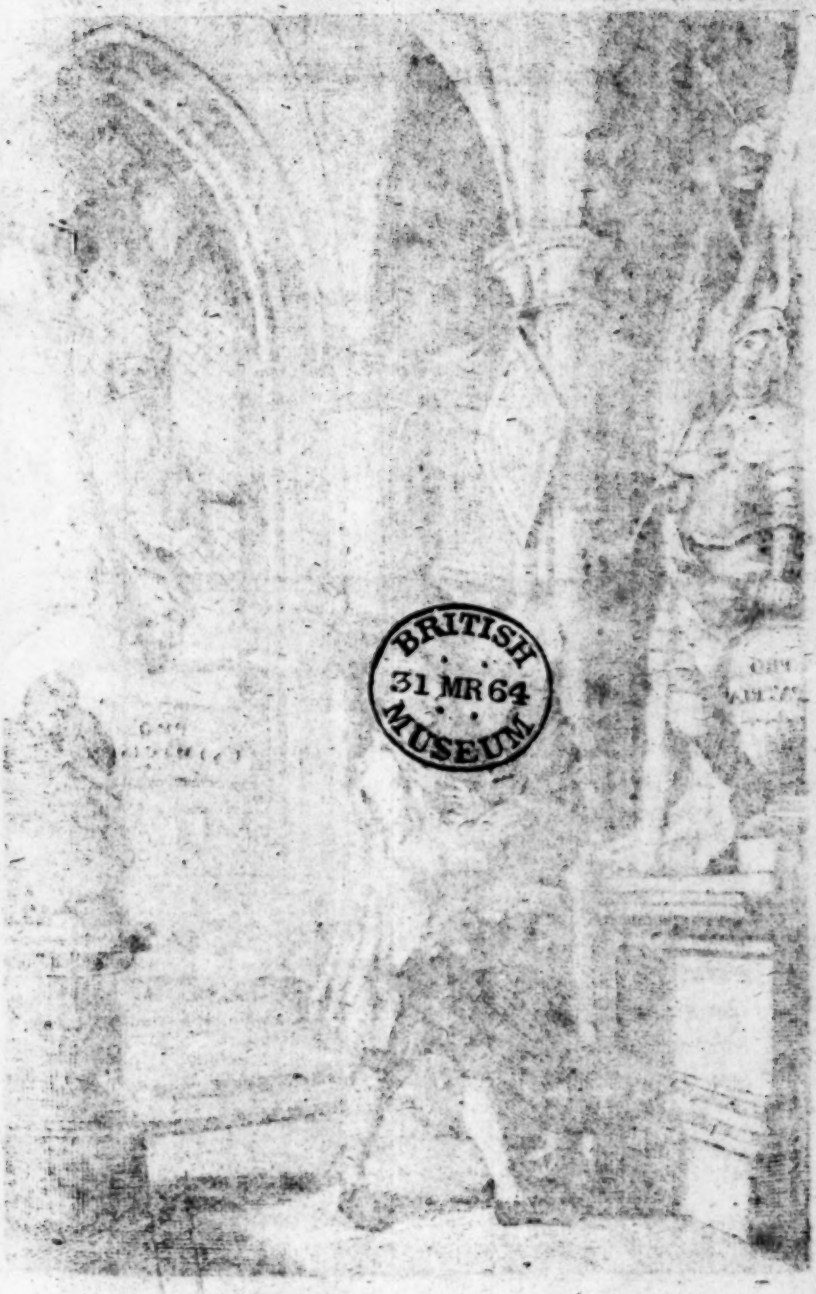
THE FRONTISPIECE.

Preſents the inſide view of a church—The floor, the pillars, and the walls, are interſperſed with ſepulchral ſtones, and funeral inſcriptions—On one ſide, is the monument of an infant adorned with an urn, with a weeping ſtatue, and inſcribed with the following epitaph—NASCENTES MORIMUR, *No ſooner born, than dead*—On a more elevated tomb, and under an aſſemblage of military weapons, is pourtrayed a warrior; ſuppoſed to be mortally wounded, expiring in the attitude of adoration, and with the ſpirit of that noble line,

"O! ſave my country, heav'n!"—ſhall be thy laſt.

A youth, beholding the repreſentation of this gallant patriot, ſeems to be ſtruck with admiration, and charmed with delight. A miniſter diverts his attention to an object of infinitely higher dignity, and greater wonder. If the hero died—PRO PATRIA, *In defence of his country:* CHRIST died—PRO INIMICIS, *For the ſalvation of his enemies.* An inſtance this, of ſuch diſintereſted, diffuſive, and divine benevolence; as makes all that heroes have achieved, and patriots ſuffered, dwindle into nothing, and ſcarce deſerve our notice.

31 MR 64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MUSEUM

He gave Himself a Ransom for all.
I. Tim. II. 6.

MEDITATIONS

AMONG

THE TOMBS.

IN A LETTER TO A LADY.

MADAM,

TRAVELLING lately into *Cornwall*, I happened to alight at a conſiderable village, in that county: where finding myſelf, under an unexpected neceſſity of ſtaying a little, I took a walk to the *church**. The doors, like the heaven to which they lead, were wide open; and readily admitted an unworthy ſtranger. Pleaſed with the opportunity, I reſolved to ſpend a few minutes under the ſacred roof.

In

* I had named, in ſome former editions, a particular church, *viz.* KILKHAMPTON; where ſeveral of the monuments, deſcribed in the following pages, really exiſt. But as I thought it convenient, to mention ſome caſes *here*, which are not, according to the beſt of my remembrance, referred to in any inſcriptions *there*; I have now omitted the name. That imagination might operate more freely, and the improvement of the reader be conſulted, without any thing that ſhould look like a variation from truth and fact.

In a ſituation ſo retired and awful, I could not avoid falling into a train of Meditations, *ſerious* and *mournfully pleaſing*. Which, I truſt, were in ſome degree profitable to *me*, while they poſſeſſed and warmed my thoughts; and, if they may adminiſter any ſatisfaction, to *you*, Madam, now they are recollected, and committed to writing, I ſhall receive a freſh pleaſure from them,

It was an ancient pile; reared by hands, that, ages ago, were mouldered into duſt—Situate in the centre of a large *Burial-ground*; remote from all the noiſe and hurry of tumultuous life.—The body ſpacious; the ſtructure lofty; the whole magnificently plain. A row of regular pillars extended themſelves through the midſt; ſupporting the roof with ſimplicity, and with dignity.—The light that paſſed through the windows, ſeemed to ſhed a kind of *luminous obſcurity*: which gave every object a grave and venerable air.—The deep *ſilence*, added to the gloomy aſpect, and both heightened by the lonelineſs of the place, greatly increaſed the ſolemnity of the ſcene.—A ſort of *religious dread* ſtole inſenſibly on my mind, while I advanced, all penſive and thoughtful, along the inmoſt ile. Such a dread, as huſhed every ruder paſſion, and diſſipated all the gay images of an alluring world.

Having adored that Eternal Majeſty, who, far from being confined to temples made with hands, has heaven for his throne, and the earth for his foot-ſtool —I took particular notice of a handſome *altar-piece*; preſented, as I was afterwards informed, by the maſter-builders of *Stow* *; out of gratitude, I preſume, to that gracious GOD, who carried them through their work, and

* The name of a grand ſeat, belonging to the late Earl of *Bath*: remarkable formerly, for it's excellent workmanſhip, and elegant furniture; once the principal reſort of the quality and gentry of the Weſt; but now demoliſhed, laid even with the ground, and ſcarce one ſtone left upon another.—So that corn may grow, or nettles ſpring, where *Stow* lately ſtood.

and enabled them to "bring forth their top-ſtone with "joy."

O! how amiable is *gratitude!* eſpecially when it has the ſupreme Benefactor for it's object. I have always looked upon gratitude, as the moſt exalted principle that can actuate the heart of man. It has ſomething noble, diſintereſted, and (if I may be allowed the term) generouſly devout. *Repentance* indicates our nature fallen, and *prayer* turns chiefly upon a regard to one's ſelf. But the exerciſes of gratitude ſubſiſted in Paradiſe, when there was no fault to deplore; and will be perpetuated in heaven, when "GOD ſhall be all in all."

The language of this ſweet temper is, "I am un-"ſpeakably obliged: what return ſhall I make?"—And, ſurely, it is no improper expreſſion of an unfeigned thankfulneſs, to decorate our Creator's courts, and *beautify* "the *place* where his honour dwelleth." Of old, the habitation of his feet was glorious: let it not, now, be ſordid or contemptible. It muſt grieve an ingenuous mind, and be a reproach to any people, to have their own houſes wainſcoted with cedar, and painted with vermilion; while the temple of the Lord of Hoſts is deſtitute of every decent ornament.

Here I recollected, and was charmed with *Solomon*'s fine addreſs to the Almighty, at the *dedication* of his famous temple. With immenſe charge, and exquiſite ſkill, he had erected the moſt rich and finiſhed ſtructure, that the ſun ever ſaw. Yet, upon a review of his work, and a reflection on the tranſcendent perfections of the Godhead, how he exalts the one, and abaſes the other!—The building was too *glorious*, for the mightieſt monarch to inhabit; too *ſacred*, for unhallowed feet even to enter; yet infinitely too *mean*, for the Deity to reſide in. It was, and the royal worſhipper acknowledged it to be, a moſt marvellous vouchſafement in uncreated Excellency, to "put his name there."—The

whole paſſage breathes ſuch a delicacy, and is animated with ſuch a ſublimity of ſentiment, that I cannot perſuade myſelf to paſs on without repeating it. * *But will GOD indeed dwell on earth? Behold! the heaven, and heaven of heavens, cannot contain thee; how much leſs this houſe that I have builded!*—Incomparable ſaying! worthy the wiſeſt of men. Who would not chooſe to poſſeſs ſuch an elevated devotion, rather than to own all the glittering materials of that ſumptuous edifice?

We are apt to be ſtruck with admiration at the ſtateline ſs and grandeur of a maſterly performance in architecture. And, perhaps, on a ſight of the ancient ſanctuary, ſhould have made the *ſuperficial* obſervation of the diſciples; "What manner of ſtones, and what build-"ings are here!"—But what a *nobler* turn of thought, and *juſter* taſte of things, does it diſcover; to join with *Iſrael*'s King, in celebrating the condeſcenſion of the divine Inhabitant! That the high and lofty One, who fills immen-

* 1 *Kings* viii. 27. *But will*—A fine abrupt beginning, moſt ſignificantly deſcribing the amazement and rapture of the royal Prophet's mind!—*GOD:* He uſes no epithet, where writers of inferior diſcernment would have been fond to multiply them: but ſpeaks of the Deity, as an incomprehenſible being, whoſe perfections and glories are exalted above all praiſe.—*Dwell:* To beſtow on ſinful creatures a propitious look; to favour them with a tranſient viſit of kindneſs; even this were an unutterable obligation. Will he then vouchſafe to fix his abode among them, and take up his ſtated reſidence with them?—*Indeed:* A word, in this connection, peculiarly emphatical; expreſſive of a condeſcenſion, wonderful and extraordinary almoſt beyond all credibility. *Behold:* Intimating the continued, or rather the increaſing ſurpriſe of the ſpeaker, and awakening the attention of the hearer.—*Behold! the heaven:* The ſpacious concave of the firmament; that wide-extended azure circumference, in which worlds unnumbered perform their revolutions, is too ſcanty an apartment for the Godhead.—Nay, *The heaven of heavens:* Thoſe vaſtly higher tracts, which lie far beyond the limits of human ſurvey; to which our very thoughts can hardly ſoar: even Theſe (unbounded as they are) cannot afford an adequate habitation for JEHOVAH: even theſe dwindle into a point, when compared with the infinitude of his eſſence; even Theſe, "are as nothing before him."—*How much leſs* proportionate is this poor diminutive ſpeck (which I have been erecting and embelliſhing), to ſo auguſt a Preſence, ſo immenſe a Majeſty!

immenſity with his glory, ſhould, in a peculiar manner, fix his abode there! ſhould *there* manifeſt an extraordinary degree of his benedictive preſence; permit ſinful mortals to approach his majeſty; and promiſe "to "make them joyful in his houſe of prayer!"—*This* ſhould more ſenſibly affect our hearts, than the moſt curious arrangement of ſtones can delight our eyes.

Nay, the everlaſting GOD does not diſdain to dwell in our *ſouls* by his Holy Spirit; and to make even our *bodies* his temple.—Tell me, ye that frame critical judgments, and balance nicely the diſtinction of things; "is "this moſt aſtoniſhing, or moſt rejoicing?"—He humbleth himſelf, the ſcripture aſſures us, even to behold the things that are in heaven *. 'Tis a moſt condeſcending favour, if HE pleaſes to take the leaſt approving notice of angels and archangels, when they bow down in homage from their celeſtial thrones. Will he then graciouſly regard, will he be united, moſt *intimately united* to poor, polluted, breathing duſt?—Unparallel'd honour! invaluable privilege! Be this my portion, and I ſhall not covet crowns, nor envy conquerors.

But let me remember, what a *ſanctity* of diſpoſition, and *uprightneſs* of converſation, ſo exalted a relation demands: remember this, "and rejoice with trembling."—Durſt I commit any iniquity, while I tread theſe hallowed courts? Could the *Jewiſh* high prieſt allow himſelf in any known tranſgreſſion, while he made that ſolemn yearly entrance † into the holy of holies, and ſtood before the immediate preſence of *JEHOVAH?* No, truly. In *ſuch* circumſtances, a thinking perſon muſt ſhudder at the moſt remote ſolicitation, to any wilful offence. I ſhould *now* be ſhocked at the leaſt indecency of behaviour, and am apprehenſive of every appearance of evil.—And why do we not carry this holy jealouſy, into

* Pſal. cxiii. 6. † Heb. ix. 7.

all our *ordinary* life? Why do we not, in every place *, reverence ourſelves; as perſons dedicated to the divinity, as *living temples* of the Godhead? for, if we are real, and not merely nominal chriſtians, the GOD of glory, according to his own promiſe †, *dwells in us, and walks in us.*—O! that this *one* doctrine of our religion might operate; with an abiding efficacy, upon our conſciences! It would be inſtead of a *thouſand* laws, to regulate our conduct; inſtead of a *thouſand* motives, to quicken us in holineſs. Under the influence of *ſuch* a conviction, we ſhould ſtudy to maintain a purity of intention; a dignity of action; and to walk worthy of that tranſcendently majeſtic Being, who admits us to a fellowſhip with himſelf, and with his Son JESUS CHRIST.

The next thing which engaged my attention, was the *lettered floor*. The pavement, ſomewhat like *Ezekiel*'s roll, was written over from one end to the other. I ſoon perceived the compariſon to hold good, in another reſpect; and the inſcriptions to be matter of "*mourning, lamentation*, and *woe* ‡." They ſeemed to court my obſervation; ſilently inviting me to read them. And what would theſe dumb monitors inform me of? "That, beneath their little circumferences, were de-"poſited ſuch and ſuch pieces of clay, which once *lived* "and *moved*, and *talked:* that they had received a "charge to preſerve their names, and were the remain-"ing truſtees of their memory."

Ah! ſaid I, is ſuch my ſituation! The adorable Creator around me, and the bones of my fellow creatures under

* — — — — παντων δε μαλις' αισχυνεο σ' αυτον, was the favourite maxim of *Pythagoras*, and ſuppoſed to be one of the beſt moral precepts, ever given to the heathen world. With what ſuperior force, and very ſingular advantage, does this argument take place in the chriſtian ſcheme! Where we are taught to regard ourſelves, not merely as *intellectual beings*, who have *reaſon* for our monitor; but as *conſecrated creatures*, who have a GOD of the moſt conſummate perfection, ever *with* us, ever *in* us.

† 2 Cor. vi. 16. ‡ Ezek. ii. 10.

under me! ſurely, then, I have great reaſon to cry out, with the revering patriarch, *How dreadful is this place*!* Seriouſneſs and devotion become this houſe for ever. May I never enter it lightly or irreverently; but with a profound awe, and godly fear.

O! that they were wiſe†! ſaid the inſpired penman. It was his laſt wiſh for his dear people. He breathed it out, and gave up the ghoſt.—But what is wiſdom? it conſiſts not in refined ſpeculations; accurate reſearches into nature; or an univerſal acquaintance with hiſtory. The divine lawgiver ſettles this important point, in his next aſpiration: *O! that they underſtood this!* that they had right apprehenſions of their ſpiritual intereſts, and eternal concerns! that they had eyes to diſcern, and inclinations to purſue, the things which belong to their peace!—But how ſhall they attain this valuable knowledge? I ſend them not, adds the illuſtrious teacher, to turn over all the volumes of literature: they may acquire, and much more expeditiouſly, this ſcience of life, *by conſidering their latter end.* This ſpark of heaven is often loſt, under the glitter of pompous erudition; but ſhines clearly, in the gloomy manſions of the tomb. Drowned is this gentle whiſper, amidſt the *noiſe* of ſecular affairs; but ſpeaks diſtinctly, in the *retirement* of ſerious contemplation.—Behold! how providentially I am brought to the ſchool of wiſdom‡! The grave, is the moſt faithful § maſter; and theſe inſtances of mortality, the moſt inſtructive leſſons.—Come then, *calm attention*, and compoſe my thoughts; come, thou *celeſtial Spirit*, and enlighten my mind; that I may ſo

* Gen. xxviii. 17. † Deut. xxxii. 29.

‡ The man how wiſe, who, ſick of gaudy ſcenes,
Is led by choice to take his favourite walk
Beneath death's gloomy, ſilent, cypreſs ſhades,
Unpierc'd by vanity's fantaſtic ray!
To read his monuments, to weigh his duſt,
Viſit his vaults, and dwell among the tombs!

Night Thoughts.

§ Wait the great teacher death. POPE.

peruſe theſe awful pages, as to become "wiſe unto "ſalvation."

Examining the records of mortality, I found the memorials of a *promiſcuous* multitude. They were huddled, at leaſt they reſted together, without any regard to rank or ſeniority. None were ambitious of the uppermoſt rooms, or chief ſeats, in this houſe of mourning. None entertained fond and eager expectations of being honourably greeted, in their darkſome cells. The man of years and experience, reputed as an oracle in his generation, was content to lie down at the feet of a babe. In this houſe appointed for all living, the ſervant was equally accommodated, and lodged in the ſame ſtory, with his maſter. The *poor indigent* lay as ſoftly, and ſlept as ſoundly, as the moſt *opulent poſſeſſor*. All the diſtinction that ſubſiſted, was, a graſſy hillock, bound with oſiers; or a ſepulchral ſtone, ornamented with imagery.

Why then, ſaid my working thoughts, O! why ſhould we raiſe ſuch a mighty ſtir, about *ſuperiority* and *precedence*; when the next remove, will reduce us all to a ſtate of equal meanneſs? Why ſhould we exalt ourſelves, or debaſe others; ſince we muſt all, one day, be upon a common level, and blended together in the ſame undiſtinguiſhed duſt? O! that this conſideration might humble my own, and others pride; and ſink our imaginations as low, as our habitations will ſhortly be!

Among theſe confuſed relics of humanity, there are, without doubt, perſons of *contrary* intereſts, and *contradicting* ſentiments. But death, like ſome able daysman, has laid his hand on the contending parties; and brought all their differences to an † amicable concluſion. Here enemies, ſworn enemies, dwell together in unity. They drop every imbittered thought, and forget

* *Miſta ſenum ac juvenum denſantur funera.* HOR.

† *Hi motus animorum, atque hæc certamina tanta,*
Pulveris exigui jactu compreſſa quieſcent. VIRG.

get that they once were foes. Perhaps, their crumbling bones *mix*, as they *moulder:* and thoſe who while they lived, ſtood aloof in irreconcileable variance; here fall into mutual embraces, and even incorporate with each other in the grave.—O! that we might learn from theſe friendly aſhes, not to perpetuate the memory of *injuries*; not to foment the fever of *reſentment*; nor cheriſh the turbulence of *paſſion*. That there may be as little animoſity and diſagreement in the land of the living, as there is in the congregation of the dead!—But I ſuſpend for a while ſuch *general* obſervations, and addreſs myſelf to a more *particular* inquiry.

Yonder *white ſtone*, emblem of the innocence it covers, informs the beholder of one, who breathed out it's tender ſoul, almoſt in the inſtant of receiving it.—There, the peaceful *infant*, without ſo much as knowing what labour and vexation mean, "* lies ſtill and is "quiet; it ſleeps and is at reſt." Staying only to waſh away it's native impurity in the laver of regeneration, it bid a ſpeedy adieu to time, and terreſtrial things.—What did the little haſty ſojourner find, ſo forbidding and diſguſtful in our upper world, to occaſion it's precipitant exit? 'Tis written, indeed, of it's ſuffering Saviour, that when he had taſted the vinegar mingled with gall, he would not drink†. And, did our new-come ſtranger, begin to *ſip* the cup of life: but, perceiving the bitterneſs, turn away it's head, and refuſe the *draught?* Was this the cauſe, why the wary babe only opened it's eyes; juſt looked on the light; and then withdrew, into the more inviting regions of undiſturbed repoſe?

Happy voyager! no ſooner launched, than *arrived* at the haven‡!—But more eminently happy *they*, who have

* Job iii. 13. † Matt. xxvii. 34.

‡ Happy the babe who privileg'd by fate
To ſhorter labour, and a lighter weight,
Receiv'd but yeſterday the gift of breath,
Order'd to-morrow to return to death. PRIOR's *Sol.*

have paſſed the waves, and weathered all the ſtorms, of a troubleſome and dangerous world! who, "through "many tribulations, have entered into the kingdom of "heaven;" and thereby brought *honour* to their divine convoy, adminiſtered *comfort* to the companions of their toil, and left an inſtructive *example* to ſucceeding pilgrims.

Highly favoured probationer! accepted without being exerciſed!—It was thy peculiar privilege, not to *feel* the ſlighteſt of thoſe evils, which *oppreſt* thy ſurviving kindred; which frequently fetch groans, from the moſt manly fortitude, or moſt elevated faith. The arrows of calamity, barbed with anguiſh, are *often* fixed deep in our choiceſt comforts. The fiery darts of temptation, ſhot from the hand of hell, are *always* flying in ſhowers around our integrity. To thee, ſweet babe, both theſe diſtreſſes and dangers were alike unknown.

Conſider this, ye *mourning parents*, and dry up your tears. Why ſhould you lament, that your little ones are crowned with victory, before the ſword was drawn, or the conflict begun?—Perhaps, the ſupreme Diſpoſer of events, foreſaw ſome inevitable ſnare of temptation forming, or ſome dreadful ſtorm of adverſity impending. And why ſhould you be ſo diſſatisfied, with that kind *precaution*; which houſed your pleaſant plant, and removed into ſhelter a tender flower, before the thunders roared: before the lightenings flew: before the tempeſt poured it's rage?—O remember! they are not loſt, but *taken away from the evil to come* *.

At the ſame time, let *ſurvivors*, doomed to *bear the heat and burden of the day*, for their encouragement reflect—that it is more honourable to have entered the liſts, and to have fought the good fight, before they come off conquerors. They who have bore the croſs, and ſubmitted to afflictive providences, with a chearful reſig-

* Iſa. lvii. 1.

reſignation; have girded up the loins of their mind, and performed their maſter's will, with an honeſt and perſevering fidelity:—theſe, having glorified their Redeemer on earth, will, probably, be as ſtars of the *firſt magnitude* in heaven. They will ſhine with brighter beams, be repleniſhed with ſtronger joys, in their Lord's everlaſting kingdom.

Here lies the grief of a fond mother, and the blaſted expectation of an indulgent father.—The *youth* grew up, like a well-watered plant; he ſhot deep, roſe high, and bid fair for manhood. But juſt as the *cedar* began to tower, and promiſe, ere long, to be the pride of the wood, and prince among the neighbouring trees—Behold! the *ax* is laid unto the root; the fatal blow ſtruck; and all it's branching honours tumbled to the duſt.—And did he fall alone? no: the hopes of his father that begat him, and the pleaſing proſpects of her that bare him, fell, and were cruſhed together with him.

Doubtleſs, it would have pierced one's heart, to have beheld the tender parents, following the breathleſs youth, to his long home. Perhaps, drowned in tears, and all overwhelmed with ſorrows, they ſtood, like weeping ſtatues, on this very ſpot.—Methinks, I ſee the deeply-diſtreſſed mourners attending the ſad ſolemnity. How they wring their hands, and pour floods from their eyes!—Is it fancy? or do I really hear the paſſionate *mother*, in an agony of affliction, taking her final leave of the darling of her ſoul? Dumb ſhe remained, while the awful obſequies were performing; dumb with grief, and leaning upon the partner of her woes. But now the inward anguiſh ſtruggles for vent; it grows too big to be oppreſſed. She advances to the brink of the grave. All her ſoul is in her eyes. She faſtens one more look upon the *dear doleful* object, before the pit ſhuts it's mouth upon him. And as ſhe looks, ſhe cries;—in broken accents, interrupted by many a riſing

riſing ſob, ſhe cries—" Farewell, my ſon! my ſon! my " only beloved! would to GOD I had died for thee!— " Farewell, my child! and farewell all my earthly " happineſs!—I ſhall never more ſee good, in the land " of the living.—Attempt not to comfort me.—I will " go mourning all my days, till my grey hairs come " down, with ſorrow, to the grave."

From this affecting repreſentation, let parents be convinced how highly it concerns them to cultivate the *morals*, and ſecure the *immortal* intereſts of their children. —If you really love the offspring of your own bodies; if your bowels yearn over thoſe amiable pledges of conjugal endearment; ſpare no pains, give all diligence, I entreat you, " to bring them up in the nurture and " admonition of the Lord." Then, may you have joy in their life, or conſolation in their death. If their ſpan is *prolonged*; their unblameable and uſeful conduct, will be the ſtaff of your age, and a balm for declining nature. Or, if the number of their years be cut off in the *midſt*; you may commit their remains to the duſt, with much the ſame comfortable expectations, as you ſend the ſurvivors to places of genteel education. You may commit them to the duſt, with chearing hopes of receiving them again to your arms, *inexpreſſibly improved* in every noble and endearing accompliſhment.

'Tis certainly a *ſevere trial*; and much more afflictive, than I am able to imagine; to reſign a lovely blooming creature, ſprung from your own loins, to the gloomy receſſes of corruption. *Thus* to reſign him, after having been long dandled upon your knees; united to your affections by a thouſand ties of tenderneſs; and now become, both the delight of your eyes, and the ſupport of your family!—To have ſuch a one torn from your boſom, and thrown into darkneſs; doubtleſs, it muſt be like a dagger in your hearts.—But O! how much more cutting to you, and confounding to the child, to

have

have the ſoul ſeparated from GOD; and, for *ſhameful ignorance*, or *early impiety*, tranſmitted to places of eternal torment! How would it aggravate your diſtreſs, and add a diſtracting *emphaſis* to all your ſighs, if you ſhould follow the pale corpſe with theſe bitter reflections!—"This "dear creature, though long ago capable of knowing "good from evil, is gone *out* of the world, before it "had learned the great deſign of coming *into* it. A "ſhort-lived momentary exiſtence, it received from me; "but no good inſtructions, no holy admonitions, no-"thing to further it's well-being in that everlaſting "ſtate, upon which it is now entered. The *poor body* is "conſigned to the coffin, and carried out to conſume "away, in the cold and ſilent grave. And what reaſon "have I to ſuppoſe, that the *precious ſoul* is in a better "condition? May I not juſtly fear, that, ſentenced by "the righteous Judge, it is going, or gone away, into "the pains of endleſs puniſhment?—Perhaps, while I "am *bewailing* it's untimely departure; it may be "*curſing*, in outer darkneſs, that ever to be deplored, "that moſt calamitous day, when it was born of ſuch "a careleſs, ungodly parent, as I have been."

Nothing, I think, but the gnawings of that worm which never dies, can equal the anguiſh of theſe ſelf-condemning thoughts. The tortures of a rack muſt be an eaſy ſuffering, compared with the ſtings and horrors of ſuch a remorſe.—How earneſtly do I wiſh, that as many as are intruſted with the management of children, would take timely care to prevent theſe ſcourges of conſcience; by endeavouring to conduct their minds into an early *knowledge* of Chriſt, and a cordial *love* of his truth!

On this hand is lodged one, whoſe ſepulchral ſtone tells a moſt pitiable tale indeed! Well may the *little images*, reclined over the ſleeping aſhes, hang down their heads with that penſive air! None can conſider ſo mournful

ful a ſtory, without feeling ſome touches of ſympathizing concern.—His *age* twenty-eight; his death *ſudden*; himſelf cut down in the prime of life, amidſt all the vivacity and vigour of manhood; while "his breaſts "were full of milk, and his bones moiſtened with mar-"row."—Probably, he entertained no apprehenſions of the evil hour. And indeed, who could have ſuſpected, that ſo bright a ſun ſhould go down at noon? To human appearance his hill ſtood ſtrong. Length of days ſeemed written in his ſanguine countenance. He ſolaced himſelf with the proſpect of a long, long ſeries of earthly ſatisfactions.—When, lo! an unexpected ſtroke deſcends! deſcends from that mighty arm, which "overturneth the mountains by their roots; and cruſh-"es the imaginary hero, * *before the moth*;" as quickly, and more eaſily, than our fingers preſs ſuch a feeble fluttering inſect to death.

Perhaps, the *nuptial joys* were all he thought on.—Were not ſuch the breathings of his enamour'd ſoul? "Yet a very little while, and I ſhall poſſeſs the utmoſt "of my wiſhes. I ſhall call my charmer mine; and, "in *her*, enjoy whatever my heart can crave."—In the midſt of ſuch enchanting views, had ſome faithful friend but ſoftly reminded him of an opening grave, and the end of all things; how *unſeaſonably* would he have reckoned the admonition! Yet, though all warm with life, and

* *Job* iv. 19. *Lemni oſſa.—Ad inſtar, ad modum, Tineæ.*—I retain this interpretation, both as it is moſt ſuitable to my purpoſe, and as it is patronized by ſome eminent commentators; eſpecially the celebrated *Schultens*. Though I cannot but give the preference to the opinion of a judicious friend, who would render the paſſage more literally, *Before the face of a moth:* making it to repreſent a creature ſo exceedingly frail, that even a moth, flying againſt it, may daſh it to pieces.—Which, beſides it's cloſer correſpondence with the exact import of the *Hebrew*, preſents us with a much finer image of the moſt extreme imbecility. For it certainly implies a far greater degree of weakneſs, to be cruſhed by the feeble flutter of the feebleſt creature, than only to be cruſhed as eaſily as that creature by the hand of man.—The French verſion is very expreſſive and beautiful; *à la rencontre d'un vermiſſeau.*

and rich in viſionary bliſs, he was even then tottering upon the brink of both.—Dreadful viciſſitude; to have the * *bridal* feſtivity turned into the *funeral* ſolemnity! Deplorable misfortune! to be ſhipwrecked in the very haven! and to periſh even in ſight of happineſs!—What a memorable proof is here of the frailty of man, in his beſt eſtate! Look, O! look on this monument, ye *gay* and *careleſs*; attend to this date; and boaſt no more of to-morrow!

Who can tell, but the *bride-maids*, girded with gladneſs, had prepared the marriage-bed? Had decked it with the richeſt covers, and dreſſed it in pillows of down? When—oh! truſt not in youth, or ſtrength, or in any thing mortal; for there is nothing certain, nothing to be depended on; beneath the unchangeable God—Death, relentleſs death, is making him another kind of bed in the duſt of the earth. Unto this he muſt be conveyed, not with a ſplendid proceſſion of *joyous attendants*; but ſtretched in the *gloomy hearſe*, and followed by a train of mourners. On this he muſt take up a lonely lodging, nor ever be releaſed, "till the heavens are no "more."—In vain does the conſenting *fair-one* put on her ornaments, and expect her ſpouſe. Did ſhe not, like *Siſera*'s mother, look out of the lattice; chide the delays of her beloved; and wonder "why his chariot was "ſo long in coming?" little thinking, that the *intended* bridegroom had for ever done with tranſitory things! that now everlaſting cares employ his mind, without one ſingle remembrance of his lovely *Lucinda!*—Go,

C diſap-

* A diſtreſs of this kind is painted in very affecting colours by *Pliny*, in an epiſtle to *Marcellinus*: *O triſte plane acerbumque funus! O morte ipſa mortis tempus indignius! Jam deſtinata erat egregio juveni; jam electus numptiarum dies; jam nos advocati. Quod gaudium quo mœrore mutatum eſt! Non poſſum exprimere verbis, quantum animo vulnus acceperim, quum audivi fundanum ipſum (ut multa luctuoſa dolor invenit) præcipientem, quod in veſtes, margaritas, gemmas, fuſtae erogaturus, hoc in thura, & unguenta, & odores impenderetur.*

PLIN. Lib. V. Epiſt. 26.

diſappointed virgin! go, mourn the uncertainty of all created bliſs! Teach thy ſoul to aſpire after a ſure and *immutable felicity!* For the once gay and gallant *Fidelio* ſleeps in other embraces; even in the icy arms of death! forgetful, eternally forgetful, of the world—and *thee.*

Hitherto, one is tempted to exclaim againſt the king of terrors, and call him *capriciouſly cruel.* He ſeems, by beginning at the wrong end of the regiſter, to have inverted the laws of nature. Paſſing over the couch of decrepit age, he has nipped infancy in it's *bud*; blaſted youth in it's *bloom*; and torn up manhood in it's full *maturity.*—Terrible indeed are theſe providences, yet not unſearchable their counſels.

For us they ſicken, and for us they die.*

Such ſtrokes, muſt not only grieve the relatives, but *ſurpriſe* the whole neighbourhood. They ſound a powerful alarm to heedleſs dreaming mortals, and are intended as a remedy for our carnal ſecurity. Such paſſing-bells, inculcate loudly our Lord's admonition; "Take ye heed, watch, and pray: for ye know not, "when the time is."—We nod, like intoxicated creatures, upon the very verge of a tremendous precipice. Theſe aſtoniſhing diſpenſations, are the kind meſſengers of heaven; to *rouſe* us from our *ſupineneſs*, and quicken us into timely circumſpection. I need not, ſurely, accommodate them with language, nor act as their interpreter. Let every one's conſcience be awake, and this will appear their awful meaning.—"O! ye ſons of "men, in the midſt of life you are in death. No ſtate, "no circumſtances, can aſcertain your preſervation a "ſingle moment. So *ſtrong* is the tyrant's arm, that "nothing can reſiſt it's force; ſo *true* his aim, that no-"thing can elude the blow. *Sudden* as lightening, "ſometimes, is his arrow launched; and wounds, and "kills,

* Night Thoughts.

"kills, in the twinkling of an eye. Never promiſe "yourſelves ſafety in any expedient, but conſtant pre- "paration. The fatal ſhafts fly ſo promiſcuouſly, "that none can gueſs the next victim. Therefore, *be "ye always ready: for in ſuch an hour as ye think not*, the final ſummons cometh."

Be ye always ready: for in ſuch an hour as ye think not —Important admonition! methinks, it reverberates from ſepulchre to ſepulchre; and addreſſes me with line upon line, and precept upon precept.—The reiterated warning, I acknowledge, is too needful; may co-operating grace, render it effectual! The momentous truth, though worthy to be *engraved*, on the tables of a moſt tenacious memory, is but ſlightly *ſketched*, on the tranſient flow of paſſion. We ſee our neighbours fall; we turn pale at the ſhock; and feel, perhaps, a trembling dread. No ſooner are they removed from our ſight; but, driven in the whirl of buſineſs, or lulled in the languors of pleaſure, we forget the providence, and neglect it's errand. The impreſſion made on our unſtable minds, is like the trace of an arrow, through the penetrated air; or the path of a keel, in the furrowed wave.—Strange ſtupidity! To cure it, another monitor beſpeaks me, from a neighbouring ſtone. It contains the narrative of an unhappy mortal, ſnatched from his friends, and hurried to the awful bar; without leiſure, either to take a *laſt farewel* of the one, or to put up ſo much as a *ſingle prayer* preparatory for the other: killed, according to the uſual expreſſion, by a ſudden ſtroke of caſualty.

Was is then a random ſtroke? Doubtleſs, the blow came from an *aiming*, though inviſible hand. GOD preſideth over the armies of heaven; GOD ruleth among the inhabitants of the earth; and GOD conducteth, what men call *chance*. Nothing, nothing comes to paſs through a blind and undiſcerning fatality. If

accidents happen; they happen according to the exact foreknowledge, and conformably to the determinate counſels, of eternal Wiſdom. The Lord, with whom are the iſſues of death, ſigns the *warrant*, and gives the high commiſſion. The ſeemingly fortuitous diſaſter is only the *agent*, or the *inſtrument*, appointed to execute the ſupreme decree. When the king of *Iſrael* was mortally wounded, it ſeemed to be a caſual ſhot. *A certain man drew a bow, at a venture* *.—*At a venture*, as he thought. But his hand was ſtrengthened by an omnipotent aid; and the ſhaft levelled by an unerring eye. So that, what we term *caſualty*, is really *providence*; accompliſhing deliberate deſigns, but concealing it's own interpoſition.—How comforting this reflection! Admirably adapted, to ſooth the throbbing anguiſh of the mourners, and compoſe their ſpirits into a quiet ſubmiſſion! Excellently ſuited to diſſipate the fears of godly ſurvivors, and create a calm intrepidity even amidſt innumerable perils!

How *thin* is the partition, between this world and another! How *ſhort* the tranſition, from time to eternity! The partition, nothing more than the breath in our noſtrils; and the tranſition may be made, in the twinkling of an eye.—Poor *Chremylus*, I remember, aroſe from the diverſion of a card-table, and dropt into the dwellings of darkneſs.—One night, *Corinna* was all gaiety in her ſpirits, all finery in her apparel, at a magnificent ball. The next night, ſhe lay pale and ſtiff, an extended corpſe, and ready to be mingled with the mouldering dead.—Young *Atticus* lived to ſee his ample and commodious ſeat completed: but not to ſpend one joyous hour, under the ſtately roof. The ſaſhes were hung, to admit the day; but the maſter's eyes are cloſed in endleſs night. The apartments were furniſhed, to invite ſociety, or adminiſter repoſe; but their lord reſts in the lower parts of the earth, in the ſolitary,

* 1 Kings xxii. 34.

tary, ſilent chambers of the tomb. The gardens were planned, and a thouſand elegant decorations deſigned; but alas! their intended poſſeſſor, is gone down to "the place of ſkulls;" is gone down to the valley of the ſhadow of death.

While I am recollecting, many, I queſtion not, are experiencing the ſame tragical viciſſitude. The eyes of that ſublime Being—who ſits upon the circle of the earth, and views all it's inhabitants with one comprehenſive glance—even now behold many tents in affliction. Such affliction as overwhelmed the *Egyptians* in that fatal night, when the deſtroying-angel ſheathed his arrows in all the pride of their ſtrength.—Some, ſinking to the floor from their *eaſy-chair*; and deaf even amidſt the piercing ſhrieks of their diſtracted relations.—Some, giving up the ghoſt as they ſit retired, or lie reclined under the *ſhady arbour*, to taſte the ſweets of the flowery ſcene.—Some, as they ſail, aſſociated with a *party* of *pleaſure*, along the dancing ſtream, and through the laughing meads. Nor is the grim intruder mollified, though wine and muſic flow around.—Some *intercepted*, as they are returning home; and ſome *interrupted*, as they enter upon an important negotiation.—Some arreſted with the gain of *injuſtice* in their hands; and ſome ſurpriſed in the very act of *lewdneſs*, or the attempt of *cruelty*.

Legions, legions of diſaſters, ſuch as no prudence can foreſee, and no care prevent, lie in wait to accompliſh our doom. A *ſtarting horſe* may throw his rider; may at once daſh his body againſt the ſtones, and fling his ſoul into the inviſible world. A *ſtack* of *chimnies* may tumble into the ſtreet, and cruſh the unwary paſſenger under the ruins. Even a ſingle *tile*, dropping from the roof, may be as fatal as the fall of the whole ſtructure.—So frail, ſo very attenuated is the thread of life, that it not only burſts before the *ſtorm*, but breaks even at a *breeze*. The moſt common occurrences, thoſe

from which we ſuſpect not the leaſt harm, may prove the weapons of our deſtruction. A grape-ſtone, a deſpicable fly, may be more mortal than *Goliah*, with all his formidable armour.—Nay, if GOD give command, our very *comforts* become *killing*. The air we breathe, is our bane; and the food we eat, the vehicle of death. —That laſt enemy has unnumbered avenues for his approach. Yea; lies intrenched in our very boſom, and holds his fortreſs in the ſeat of our life. The crimſon fluid, which *diſtributes health*, is impregnated with the ſeeds of death. Heat may inflame it, or toil oppreſs it; and make it deſtroy the parts it was deſigned to cheriſh. Some unſeen impediment may obſtruct it's paſſage, or ſome unknown violence may divert it's courſe; in either of which caſes, it acts the part of a poiſonous draught, or a deadly ſtab.

Ah! in what perils is vain life engag'd!
What ſlight neglects, what trivial faults deſtroy
The hardieſt frame! of indolence, of toil
We die; of want, of ſuperfluity.
The all-ſurrounding heav'n, the vital air,
Is big with death.

Since then we are ſo liable to be diſpoſſeſſed of this earthly tabernacle, let us look upon ourſelves only as *tenants at will*; and hold ourſelves in perpetual readineſs, to depart at a moment's warning. Without ſuch an *habitual* readineſs, we are like wretches, that ſleep on the top of a maſt, while a horrid gulph yawns, or furious waves rage, below. And where can be the peace, what the ſatisfaction of ſuch a ſtate?—Whereas, a prepared condition will inſpire a chearfulneſs of temper, not to be diſmayed by any alarming accident; and create a firmneſs of mind, not to be overthrown by the moſt threatening dangers. When the city is fortified with walls, furniſhed with proviſion, guarded by able and

and reſolute troops; what have the inhabitants to fear? what may they not enjoy? So, juſt ſo, or rather by a much ſurer band, are connected the *real* taſte of life, and the *conſtant* thought of death.

I ſaid, *our very comforts may become killing*.—And ſee the truth inſcribed by the hand, ſealed with the ſignet, of fate. The marble, which graces yonder pillar, informs me, that, near it, are depoſited the remains of *Sophronia*; the much lamented *Sophronia*, who died in *childbed*.—How often does this calamity happen? The branch ſhoots; but the ſtem withers. The babe ſprings to light; but ſhe that bare him, breathes her laſt. She gives life, but gives it (O pitiable conſideration!) at the expence of her own; and becomes, at once, a *mother*, and a *corpſe*.—Or elſe, perhaps, ſhe expires in ſevere pangs, and is herſelf a tomb for her infant; while the melancholy complaint of a monarch's woe, is the epitaph for them both; *The children are come to the birth, and there is not ſtrength to bring forth**.—Leſs to be lamented, in my opinion, *this* misfortune than the *other*. Better, for the tender ſtranger, to be ſtopped in the porch; than to enter, only to converſe with affliction. Better to find a grave in the womb; than to be expoſed on a hazardous world, without the guardian of it's infantile years, without the faithful guide of it's youth.

This monument is diſtinguiſhed by it's finer materials, and more delicate appendages. It ſeems to have taken it's model from an affluent hand; directed by a generous heart; which thought it could never do enough for the deceaſed.—It ſeems, alſo, to exhibit an *emblematical* picture of *Sophronia*'s perſon and accompliſhments. Is her beauty, or, what is more than beauty, her white-rob'd innocence, repreſented by the ſnowy *colour*? The *ſurface*, ſmoothly poliſhed, like her amiable

* Iſa. xxxvii. 3.

amiable temper, and engaging manners. The *whole* adorned, in a well-judged medium, between extravagant pomp, and ſordid negligence; like her undiſſembled goodneſs, remote from the leaſt oſtentation, yet in all points exemplary.—But ah! how vain, were all theſe endearing charms! How vain, the luſtre of thy ſprightly eye! How vain, the bloom of thy bridal youth! How vain, the honours of thy ſuperior birth! How unable to ſecure the lovely poſſeſſor, from the *ſavage violence* of death!—How ineffectual, the univerſal eſteem of thy acquaintance; the fondneſs of thy tranſported huſband; or even the ſpotleſs integrity of thy character; to prolong thy ſpan, or procure thee a ſhort reprieve! —The concurrence of all theſe circumſtances, reminds me of thoſe beautiful and tender lines;

How lov'd, how *valu'd* once, avails thee not;
To whom related, or by whom begot.
A heap of duſt alone remains of thee:
'Tis all *THOU* art!—and all the *PROUD* ſhall be*!

POPE's *Miſcell.*

Yet,

* Theſe verſes are inſcribed on a ſmall, but elegant monument, lately erected in the great church at *Northampton*. Which, in the *hieroglyphical* decorations, correſponds with the deſcription introduced above. In this circumſtance particularly, that it is dedicated to the memory of an amiable woman, Mrs. ANNE STONHOUSE; the excellent wife of my worthy friend Dr. STONHOUSE. Who has ſeen all the powers of that healing art, to which I, and ſo many others, have been *greatly* indebted, failing in their attempts to preſerve a life *dearer* to him than his own.

Nec proſunt domino, quæ proſunt omnibus, artes.

No longer his all-healing art avails;
But ev'ry remedy it's maſter fails.

In the midſt of this tender diſtreſs, he has ſought ſome kind of conſolation, even from the ſepulchral marble. By teaching it to ſpeak, at once, his eſteem for *her memory*; and his veneration for *that religion*, which ſhe ſo eminently adorned. Nor could this be more ſignificantly done, than by ſumming up her character, in that conciſe, but comprehenſive ſentence, A SINCERE CHRISTIAN. *Conciſe* enough, to be the motto for a mourning ring; yet as *comprehenſive*

BRITISH
31 MR 64
MUSEUM

Be ye not thro' Faith
Slothfull but fol-
lowers of Them who
Patience
inherit the
Promises.
HEB. VI. 12
In Memory of ANNE STONEHOUSE,
a sincere CHRISTIAN.
How lov'd how valu'd once avails Thee not,
To whom related, or by whom begot:
A heap of Dust alone remains of Thee;
Tis all THOU art! and all the PROUD shall be!
She died a few days after ye Birth of her 4 Child
Decr. 1747, in the 25th year of her Age.
Life
how
short!
Eternity
how
long!
SUBLIMIORA PETAMUS

Yet, though unable to divert the ſtroke, chriſtianity is ſovereign to pluck out the ſting of death. Is not this the ſilent language of thoſe *lamps*, which burn, and of that

kenſive, as the moſt enlarged ſphere of perſonal, ſocial, and religious worth. For, whatſoever things are pure; whatſoever things are lovely; whatſoever things are of good report; are they not all included in that grand and noble aggregate, *A ſincere Chriſtian?*

The firſt lines, conſidered in ſuch a connection, are wonderfully plaintive and pathetic;

How lov'd, how valu'd *once, avails thee not;*
To whom related, or by whom begot.

They ſound, at leaſt in *my* ears, like the voice of ſorrow, mingled with admiration. The ſpeaker ſeems to have been loſt, for a while, in melancholy contemplation; ſuddenly breaks out into this abrupt encomium; then melts into tears, and can proceed no farther. Yet, in this caſe, how eloquent is ſilence! While it hints the univerſal eſteem which attended, and the ſuperiority of birth which diſtinguiſhed, the deceaſed *wife*; it expreſſes, beyond all the pomp of words, the yearning affection, and heart-felt affliction, of the ſurviving *huſband*.—Amidſt the group of monumental marbles, which are laviſh of their panegyric; *this*, I think, reſembles the incomparable addreſs of the painter. Who, having placed, round a beautiful expiring virgin, her friends in all the agonies of grief; repreſented the *unequalled* anguiſh of the *father*, with far greater livelineſs and ſtrength, or rather with an inexpreſſible emphaſis, by drawing a veil over *his* face.

If the laſt lines, are a wide departure from the beaten track of our modern epitaphs, and the very reverſe of their high-flown compliments,

A heap of duſt alone remains of Thee!
'Tis all THOU *art!—and all the* PROUD *ſhall be!*

they are not without a precedent, and one of the moſt conſummate kind. Since they breathe the very ſpirit of that ſacred elegy, in which all the heart of the hero and the friend, ſeems to be diſſolved; *How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war periſhed!* 2 Sam. i. 27.—They remind the reader, of that awful leſſon, which was originally dictated by the ſupreme Wiſdom; *Duſt thou art, and unto duſt thou ſhalt return*, Gen. iii. 19.—They inculcate, with all the force of the moſt convincing evidence, that ſolemn admonition, delivered by the prophet; *Ceaſe Ye from man, whoſe breath is in his noſtrils; for wherein is He to be accounted of?* Iſa. ii. 22.

That no reader, however inattentive, might miſtake the ſenſe and deſign of *this* part of the *fourth* line,

'Tis ALL *Thou art!*——

it is guarded above and beneath.—*Above*, is an expanded book, that ſeems to be waved, with an air of triumph, over the emblem of death. Which we cannot but ſuppoſe to be the volume of inſpiration, as it exhibits

that *heart*, which flames; of thoſe *palms*, which flouriſh, and of that *crown*, which glitters, in the well-imitated and gilded marble? Do they not, to the diſcerning eye, deſcribe the vigilance of her faith; the fervency of her devotion; her victory over the world; and the celeſtial diadem, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, ſhall give her at that day *?

How happy the huſband, in ſuch a ſharer of his bed, and partner of his fortunes! Their inclinations were nicely-tuned *uniſons*, and all their converſation was *harmony*. How ſilken the yoke to ſuch a pair, and what bleſſings were twiſted with ſuch bands! Every joy was heightened, and every care alleviated. Nothing ſeemed wanting to conſummate their bliſs, but a hopeful progeny, riſing around them.—That they might ſee themſelves, multiplied in their little ones; ſee their mingled graces, transfuſed into their offspring; and feel the glow of their affection *augmented*, by being *reflected* from their children. "Grant us this gift, ſaid their united "prayers, and our ſatisfactions are crowned; we re- "queſt no more."

Alas! how blind are mortals to future events! How unable to diſcern, what is really good †! *Give me children*,

exhibits a ſort of *abridgment* of it's whole contents, in thoſe animated words; BE YE NOT SLOTHFUL, BUT FOLLOWERS OF THEM, WHO THROUGH FAITH AND PATIENCE INHERIT THE PROMISES, *Heb.* vi. 12.—*Beneath*, that every part might be pregnant with inſtruction, are thoſe ſtriking reflections; worthy the conſideration of the *higheſt* proficient in knowledge and piety, yet obvious to the underſtanding of the moſt *untaught* reader; LIFE, HOW SHORT! ETERNITY, HOW LONG!—May my ſoul learn the forcible purport of this ſhort leſſon, in her contracted ſpan of time! and all eternity will not be too long, to rejoice in having learned it.

As the Doctor has ordered a little copper-plate of the monument to be engraven, for a few of his particular acquaintance; he has indulged me in the liberty of preſenting my readers with the draught; to which I refer them, for a farther *illuſtration of the deſcription.*

* 2 Tim. iv. 8.

† *Neſcia mens hominum fati, ſortiſque futuræ!*
Turno Tempus erit, magno cum optaverit emptum,
Intactum pallanta; & cum ſpolia iſta diemque
Oderit.—— VIRG.

dren, ſaid *Rachel*, *or elſe I die**. An ardour of impatience, altogether unbecoming; and as miſtaken, as it was unbecoming. She dies, not by the *diſappointment*, but by the *accompliſhment*, of her deſire.—If children are, to parents, like a flowery chaplet, whoſe beauties bloſſom with ornament, and whoſe odours breathe delight; death, or ſome fell misfortune, may find means to entwine themſelves with the lovely wreath. Whenever our ſouls are poured out, with paſſionate importunity, after any inferior acquiſition: it may be truly ſaid, in the words of our divine Maſter, *ye know not what ye aſk*.—Does providence with-hold the thing that we long for? It denies in mercy; and only with-holds the occaſion of our miſery, perhaps the inſtrument of our ruin. With a ſickly appetite, we often loathe what is wholeſome, and hanker after our bane. Where, *imagination* dreams of unmingled ſweets; There, *experience* frequently finds the bitterneſs of woe.

Therefore, may we covet immoderately, neither this nor that form of earthly felicity; but refer the whole of our condition, to the choice of unerring Wiſdom. May we learn to renounce our own will; and be ready to make a ſacrifice of our warmeſt wiſhes, whenever they run counter to the good pleaſure of GOD. For, indeed, as to obey his laws, is to be perfectly free; ſo, to *reſign* ourſelves to his diſpoſal, is to *eſtabliſh* our own happineſs, and to be ſecure from fear of evil.

Here, a ſmall and plain ſtone is placed upon the ground. Purchaſed, one would imagine, from the little fund, and formed by the hand, of frugality itſelf. Nothing coſtly: not one decoration added: only a very ſhort inſcription; and that ſo effaced, as to be ſcarcely intelligible.—Was the depoſitory unfaithful to it's truſt? Or were the letters worn, by the frequent reſort of the ſurviving family; to mourn over the grave, of a moſt

* Gen. xxx. 1.

moſt valuable and beloved relative?—For I perceive, upon a cloſer inſpection, that it covers the remains of a father. A *religious father*; ſnatched from his growing offspring, before they were ſettled in the world, or ſo much as their principles fixed by a thorough education.

This, ſure, is the moſt complicated diſtreſs, that has hitherto come under our conſideration. The *ſolemnities* of ſuch a *dying chamber*, are ſome of the moſt melting and melancholy ſcenes imaginable.—There lies the affectionate huſband; the indulgent parent; the faithful friend; and the generous maſter. He lies in the laſt extremities, and on the very point of diſſolution. Art has done it's all. The raging diſeaſe mocks the power of medicine. It haſtens with reſiſtleſs impetuoſity, to execute it's dreadful errand; to rend aſunder the ſilver cord of life, and the more delicate tye of ſocial attachment, and conjugal affection.

A *ſervant* or two, from a revering diſtance, caſt many a wiſhful look, and condole their honoured maſter in the language of ſighs. The condeſcending mildneſs of his commands, was wont to produce an alacrity of obedience, and render their ſervice a pleaſure. The remembrance of both imbitters their grief, and makes it trickle plentifully down their honeſt cheeks.—His *friends*, who have ſo often ſhared his joys, and gladdened his mind with their enlivening converſe, now are miſerable comforters. A ſympathizing and mournful pity, is all the relief, they are able to contribute: unleſs it be augmented by their ſilent prayers for the divine ſuccour, and a word of conſolation ſuggeſted from the ſcriptures*. Thoſe poor innocents, the *children*,

* Texts of Scripture, proper for ſuch an occaſion; containing promiſes—of ſupport under affliction, *Lam.* iii 32. *Heb.* xii. 6. 2 *Cor.* iv. 17.—of pardon, *Iſa.* liii. 5. *Iſa.* i. 18. 1 *John* ii. 1, 2. *Acts* x. 43.—of juſtification, *Rom.* v. 9. *Rom.* viii. 33, 34. 2 *Cor.* v. 21.—of victory over death, *Pſalm* xxiii. 4. *Pſalm* lxxiii. 26. 1 *Cor.* xv. 56, 57.—of a happy reſurrection, *John* vi. 40. 2 *Cor.* v. 1. *Rev.* vii. 16, 17.

children, croud around the bed; drowned in tears, and almoſt frantic with grief, they ſob out their little ſouls, and paſſionately cry; "Will he leave us? "Leave us, in a helpleſs condition! Leave us, to an "injurious world!"

Theſe ſeparate ſtreams are all united in the diſtreſſed *ſpouſe*, and overwhelm her breaſt with an impetuous tide of ſorrows. In her, the lover weeps; the wife mourns; and all the mother yearns. To her, the loſs is beyond meaſure aggravated, by months and years of delightful ſociety, and exalted friendſhip.—Where, alas! can ſhe meet with ſuch unſuſpected fidelity, or repoſe ſuch unreſerved confidence? Where find ſo diſcreet a counſellor; ſo improving an example; and a guardian ſo ſedulouſly attentive, to the intereſts of herſelf, and her children?—See! how ſhe hangs over the languiſhing bed; moſt tenderly ſolicitous to prolong a life, important and deſirable far beyond her own. Or, if that be impracticable, no leſs tenderly officious to ſooth the laſt agonies of her *dearer ſelf*.—Her hands, trembling under direful apprehenſions, wipe the cold dews from the livid cheeks; and ſometimes ſtay the ſinking head on her gentle arms, ſometimes reſt it on her compaſſionate boſom.—See! how ſhe gazes with a ſpeechleſs ardor, on the pale countenance, and meagre features. Speechleſs her tongue; but ſhe looks unutterable things. While all her ſoft paſſions throb with unavailing fondneſs, and her very ſoul bleeds with exquiſite anguiſh.

The *ſufferer*, all patient and adoring, ſubmits to the divine will; and, by ſubmiſſion, becomes ſuperior to his affliction. He is ſenſibly touched with the diſconſolate ſtate of his attendants; and pierced with an anxious concern for his wife and his children. His wife, who will ſoon be a *deſtitute widow*; his children, who will ſoon be *helpleſs orphans*. "Yet, though caſt down, not "in deſpair." He is greatly refreſhed, by his truſt in

the everlaſting covenant, and his hope of approaching glory. Religion gives a dignity to diſtreſs. At each interval of eaſe, he comforts his very comforters; and ſuffers with all the majeſty of woe.

The ſoul, juſt going to abandon the tottering clay, collects all her force, and exerts her *laſt* efforts. The good man raiſes himſelf on his pillow; extends a kind hand to his ſervants, which is bathed in tears; takes an affecting farewel of his friends; claſps his wife in a feeble embrace; kiſſes the dear pledges of their mutual love; and then pours all that remains of life and of ſtrength, in the following words;—"I die, *my* dear "*children:* but GOD, the everlaſting GOD, will be with "you.—Though you loſe an earthly parent, you have "a father in heaven, who lives for evermore.—No"thing, nothing but an unbelieving heart, and irreli"gious life, can ever ſeparate you, from the regards of "his providence—from the endearments of his love."

He could proceed no farther. His heart was full; but utterance failed.—After a ſhort pauſe, with difficulty, great difficulty, he added;—"You, the dear *partner* "of my ſoul, you are now the only protector of our "orphans.—I leave you under a weight of cares.—But "GOD, who defendeth the cauſe of the widow—GOD, "whoſe promiſe is faithfulneſs and truth—GOD hath "ſaid, *I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee**.—This "revives my drooping ſpirits—Let this ſupport the "wife of my boſom.—And now, O Father of compaſ"ſions, into thy hands I commend my ſpirit—encourag"ed by thy promiſed goodneſs, *I leave my fatherleſs*"—

Here, he fainted; fell back upon the bed; and lay for ſome minutes, bereft of his ſenſes. As a *taper*, upon the very point of extinction, is ſometimes ſuddenly rekindled, and leaps into a quivering flame; ſo *life*, before it totally expired, gave a parting ſtruggle, and once more looked abroad from the opening eye-lids.—He would

* Heb. xiii. 5.

would fain have ſpoke; fain have uttered the ſentence, he began. More than once he aſſayed; but the organs of ſpeech were become like a broken veſſel; and nothing but the obſtructing phlegm, rattled in his throat. His *aſpect*, however, *ſpoke* affection inexpreſſible. With all the father, all the huſband, ſtill living in his looks; he takes one more view of thoſe *dear children*, whom he had often beheld with a parental triumph. He turns his dying eyes on that *beloved woman*, whom he never beheld but with a glow of delight. Fixed in this poſture, amidſt ſmiles of love, and under a gleam of heaven, they ſhine out their laſt.

Upon this, the ſilent ſorrow burſts into loud laments. They weep, and refuſe to be comforted. Till ſome length of time, had given vent to the exceſs of paſſion; and the conſolations of religion, had ſtanched their bleeding woes. Then, the afflicted family ſearch for the ſentence, which fell *unfiniſhed* from thoſe loved, thoſe venerable, and pious lips. They find it recorded by the prophet *Jeremiah*, containing the direction of infinite wiſdom, and the promiſe of unbounded goodneſs; *leave thy fatherleſs children; I will preſerve them alive; and let thy widows truſt in me**. This, now, is the comfort of their life, and the joy of their heart. They treaſure it up in their memories. It is the beſt of *legacies*, and an *inexhauſtible* fund. A fund, which will ſupply all their wants, by entailing the bleſſing of heaven, on all their honeſt labours.—They are rich; they are happy; in this ſacred pledge of the divine favour. They fear no evil; they want no good; becauſe GOD is their portion, and their guardian GOD.

No ſooner turned from one *memento* of my own, and memorial of another's deceaſe, but a ſecond, a third, a long ſucceſſion of theſe melancholy monitors, croud upon my ſight†.—That which has fixed my obſervation,

* Jerem. xlix. 11.

† ——*Plurima mortis imago.* VIRG.

is one of a more *grave* and ſable *aſpect* than the former. I ſuppoſe, it preſerves the relics of a more aged perſon. One would conjecture, that he made ſomewhat of a figure, in his ſtation among the living; as his monument does, among the funeral marbles. Let me draw near, and enquire of the ſtone; "*Who, or what*, is beneath "it's ſurface?"—I am informed, he was once the owner of a conſiderable eſtate; which was much improved, by his own application and management: that he left the world in the buſy period of life; advanced a little beyond the meridian.

Probably, replied my muſing mind, one of thoſe *indefatigable drudges*, who riſe early; late take reſt; and eat the bread of carefulneſs; not to ſecure the loving-kindneſs of the Lord: not to make proviſion for any reaſonable neceſſity: but only to *amaſs* together ten thouſand times more, than they can poſſibly *uſe*.—Did he not lay ſchemes for enlarging his fortune, and aggrandizing his family? Did he not purpoſe to join field to field, and add houſe to houſe; till his poſſeſſions were almoſt as vaſt, as his deſires? That, then, he would* ſit down, and enjoy what he had acquired; breathe a while from his toilſome purſuit of things temporal, and, perhaps, think a little of things eternal.

But ſee the folly of *worldly wiſdom!* How ſilly, how childiſh, is the ſagacity of (what is called) manly and maſterly prudence; when it contrives more ſolicitouſly for *time*, than it provides for *eternity!* How ſtrangely infatuated are thoſe ſubtil heads: which weary themſelves, in concerting meaſures for *phantoms* of a *day*; and ſcarce beſtow a thought, on *everlaſting realities!*—When every wheel moves on ſmoothly; when all the well-diſpoſed deſigns are ripening apace for execution; and the long expected criſis of enjoyment ſeems to approach;

* ——*Hac mente laborem*
Seſe ferre, ſenes ut in otia tuta recedant,
Aiunt, cum ſibi ſint congeſta cibaria.— HOR.

proach; behold! God from on high laughs at the *Babel-builder*. Death touches the bubble, and it breaks; it drops into nothing. The cobweb, moſt finely ſpun indeed, but more eaſily diſlodged, is ſwept away in an inſtant; and all the abortive projects are buried, in the ſame grave with their projector. So true is that verdict, which the wiſdom from above paſſes, on theſe *ſucceſsful unfortunates*: "They walk in a vain ſhadow, and diſqui-"et themſelves in vain *."

Speak, ye that attended ſuch a one in his laſt minutes; ye that heard his *expiring ſentiments*; did he not cry out; in the language of diſappointed ſenſuality?—"O death! how terrible is thy approach to a man im-"merſed in ſecular cares, and void of all concern for "the never-ending *hereafter!* Where, alas! is the pro-"fit, where the comfort of entering deep into the "knowledge, and of being dexterous in the diſpatch, "of earthly affairs; ſince I have, all the while, neglect-"ed *the one thing needful!* Deſtructive miſtake! I have "been attentive to every inferior intereſt; I have laid "myſelf out on the trifles of a moment; but have "diſregarded *heaven*; have forgot *eternal ages!* O! "that my days"—Here he was going on to breathe ſome fruitleſs wiſhes; or to form, I know not what, ineffectual reſolutions. But a ſudden convulſion ſhook his nerves; diſabled his tongue; and, in leſs than an hour, diſſolved his frame.

May the children of this world be warned, by the dying words of an unhappy brother; and gather advantage, from his misfortune.—Why ſhould they pant, with ſuch impatient ardor, after *white* and *yellow* earth; as if the univerſe did not afford ſufficient, for every one to take a little? Why ſhould they *lade* themſelves with thick clay; when they are to "*run* for an incorruptible "crown, and preſs towards the prize of their high call-"ing?"

* Pſal. xxxix. 6.

"ing?" Why ſhould they overload the veſſel, in which their everlaſting ALL is embarked; or fill their arms with *ſuperfluities*, when they are to ſwim for their *lives*? —Yet, ſo prepoſterous is the conduct of thoſe perſons, who are *all induſtry*, to heap up an abundance of the wealth which periſheth; but are ſcarce ſo much as *faintly deſirous*, of being rich towards GOD.

O! that we may walk through all theſe glittering toys, at leaſt with a wiſe indifference, if not with a ſuperior diſdain! Having enough for the conveniencies of life, let us only *accommodate* ourſelves with things below, and lay up our *treaſures* in the regions above.—Whereas, if we indulge an anxious concern, or laviſh an inordinate care, on any tranſitory poſſeſſions; we ſhall rivet them to our affections with ſo firm an union, that the utmoſt ſeverity of pain muſt attend the ſeparating ſtroke. By ſuch an eager attachment, to what will certainly be raviſhed from us; we ſhall only inſure to ourſelves *accumulated anguiſh*, againſt the agonizing hour. We ſhall plant afore-hand, our dying pillow with thorns*.

Some, I perceive, arrived at threeſcore years and ten, before they made their exit; nay, ſome few reſigned not their breath, till they had numbered fourſcore revolving harveſts. Theſe I would hope, "remembered their "Creator in the days of their youth;" before their ſtrength became labour and ſorrow:—Before that low ebb of languiſhing nature, when *the keepers of the houſe tremble, and thoſe that look out of the windows are darkened*†: when even the lighting down of *the graſhopper, is a burden*.

* Lean not on earth; 'twill pierce thee to the heart;
A broken reed at beſt, but oft a ſpear;
On it's ſharp point peace bleeds, and hope expires.
Night Thoughts, No. III.

† *Eccleſ.* xii. 3, 5. I need not remind my reader, that, by the former of theſe figurative expreſſions, is ſignified the *enervated* ſtate of their *hands* and *arms*; by the latter, the *dimneſs* of the eyes, or the total *loſs* of *ſight*: that, taken in connexion with other parts of the chapter, they exhibit, in a ſeries of bold and lively metaphors, a deſcription of the *various infirmities* attendant on old age.

burden on the bending ſhoulders; *and deſire* itſelf *fails* in the liſtleſs, lethargic ſoul:—Before thoſe heavy hours come, and thoſe tireſome moments draw nigh; in which, there is too much reaſon to ſay, "*we have no pleaſure* "*in them*; no improvement from them."

If their lamps were unfurniſhed with oil; how unfit muſt they be, in ſuch decrepit circumſtances, to go to the market, and buy*! For, beſides a variety of diſorders, ariſing from the enfeebled conſtitution; their corruptions muſt be ſurpriſingly ſtrengthened, by ſuch a long courſe of irreligion. *Evil habits* muſt have ſtruck the deepeſt root; muſt have twiſted themſelves with every fibre of the heart; and be as thoroughly ingrained in the diſpoſition, as the ſoot in the *Ethiopian*'s complexion, or the ſpots in the leopard's ſkin. If ſuch a one, under ſuch diſadvantages, ſurmounts all the difficulties, which lie in his way to glory; it muſt be a great and mighty ſalvation indeed. If ſuch a one eſcapes deſtruction, and is ſaved at the laſt; it muſt, without all peradventure, be—*ſo as by fire* †.

This is the ſeaſon, which ſtands in need of *comfort*; and is very improper to enter upon the *conflict*. The huſbandman ſhould now be putting in his ſickle, or eating the fruit of his labours; not beginning to break up the ground, or ſcatter the ſeed.—Nothing, 'tis true, is impoſſible with GOD: he ſaid, *let there be light, and there was light*: inſtantaneous light, diffuſed as quick as thought, through all the diſmal dominion of primeval darkneſs. At his command, a leproſy of the longeſt continuance, and of the utmoſt inveteracy, departs in a moment. He can, in the greatneſs of his ſtrength, quicken the wretch who has lain dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, not four days only, but fourſcore years.—Yet truſt not, O truſt not, a point of ſuch *inexpreſſible* importance, to ſo dreadful an *uncertainty*. GOD may ſuſpend his power; may withdraw his help; may ſwear in his wrath,

* Matt. xxv. 9. † 1 Cor. iii. 15.

wrath, that ſuch abuſers of his long-ſuffering ſhall "never enter into his reſt."

Ye therefore, that are *vigorous* in health, and *blooming* in years, improve the precious opportunity. Improve your golden hours, to the nobleſt of all purpoſes: ſuch as may render you meet, for the inheritance of ſaints in light; and aſcertain your title to a ſtate of immortal youth, to a crown of eternal glory*.—Stand not, all the prime of your day, idle: trifle no longer with the offers of this immenſe felicity: but make haſte, and delay not the time, to keep GOD's commandments. While you are loitering in a *gay inſenſibility*, death may be bending his bow, and marking you out for ſpeedy victims.—Not long ago, I happened to 'ſpy a thoughtleſs *jay*. The poor bird was idly buſied, in dreſſing his pretty plumes; or hopping careleſly from ſpray to ſpray. A ſportſman, coming by, obſerves the feathered rover. Immediately he lifts the tube, and levels his blow. Swifter than whirlwind, flies the leaden death; and in a moment, lays the ſilly creature, breathleſs on the ground.—Such, *ſuch* may be the fate of the man, who has a fair occaſion of obtaining grace to-day; and wantonly poſtpones the improvement of it, till to-morrow. He may be cut off, in the midſt of his folly; and ruined *for ever*, while he is dreaming of being *wiſe hereafter*.

Some, no doubt, came to this their laſt retreat, *full of piety*, and *full of days*; "as a ſhock of corn, ripe "with

* May I be permitted to recommend, as a treaſure of ineſtimable value, and a treatiſe particularly appoſite to my ſubject, *Dr.* LUCAS's *Inquiry after Happineſs?* That part eſpecially, which diſplays the method, and enumerates the advantages, of *improving life, or living much in a little time.* Chap. III. p. 158. of the 6th edit.—An *author*; in whom the gentleman, the ſcholar, and the chriſtian, are moſt happily united. A *performance*; which, in point of ſolid argument, unaffected piety, and a vein of thought amazingly fertile, has, perhaps, no ſuperior.—Nor can I wiſh my reader a more refined pleaſure, or a more ſubſtantial happineſs; than that of having the ſentiments of this entertaining and pathetic writer, wove into the very texture of his heart.

"with age, and laden with plenty, cometh in, in his "ſeaſon *."—Theſe were children of light, and *wiſe* in their generation. Wiſe with that exalted wiſdom, which cometh from above; and with that enduring wiſdom, which laſts to eternity.—*Rich* alſo they were, more honourably and permanently rich, than all the votaries of mammon. The wealth of the *one* has made itſelf wings, and is irrecoverably gone. While the wretched acquirers are tranſmitted to that place of penury and pain; where, not ſo much as one drop of water is allowed, to cool their ſcorched tongues. The ſtores of the *other* ſtill abide with them; will never depart from them; but make them glad, for ever and ever, in the city of their GOD. Their treaſures were ſuch, as no created power could *take away*: ſuch as none but infinite Beneficence can *beſtow*; and (comfortable to conſider!) ſuch as I, and every indigent longing ſinner, may *obtain*; treaſures of heavenly knowledge, and ſaving faith; treaſures of atoning blood, and imputed righteouſneſs.

Here † lie their bodies in "peaceable habitations, "and quiet reſting places." Here they have thrown off every *burden*, and are eſcaped from every *ſnare*. The head aches no more; the eye forgets to weep; the fleſh is

* Job v. 26.

† Some, I know, are offended at our burying corpſes within the church; and exclaim againſt it, as a very great *impropriety* and *indecency*. But this, I imagine, proceeds from an exceſſive and miſtaken delicacy. If proper care be taken to ſecure from injury, the *foundations* of the *building*; and to prevent the exhalation of any *noxious effluvia*, from the putrefying fleſh; I cannot diſcover any inconveniencies attending this practice.

The notion, that noiſome carcaſſes (as they are called) are very unbecoming a place conſecrated to religious purpoſes, ſeems to be derived from the *antiquated Jewiſh* canon. Whereby it was declared, that a dead body imparted defilement to the perſon, who touched it; and polluted the ſpot, where it was lodged. On which account, the *Jews* were ſcrupulouſly careful, to have their ſepulchres built at a diſtance from their houſes; and made it a point of conſcience, not to ſuffer burial places to ſubſiſt in the city. But as this was a rite purely

is no longer racked with acute, nor waſted with lingering deſtempers. Here, they receive a final releaſe from pain, and an everlaſting diſcharge from ſorrow. Here, danger

purely *ceremonial*; it ſeems to be entirely ſuperſeded by the *goſpel* diſpenſation.

I cannot forbear thinking, that, under the chriſtian œconomy, there is a propriety and uſefulneſs in the cuſtom.—*Uſefulneſs*, becauſe it muſt render our ſolemn aſſemblies more venerable and awful. For, when we walk over the duſt of our friends, or kneel upon the aſhes of our relations; this awakening circumſtance muſt ſtrike a lively impreſſion of our own mortality. And what conſideration can be more effectual, to make us ſerious and attentive in hearing; earneſt and importunate in praying?

As for the *fitneſs* of the uſage, it ſeems perfectly ſuitable to the deſign of thoſe ſacred edifices. They are ſet apart for GOD; not only to receive his worſhippers, but to preſerve the furniture for holy miniſtrations, and what is, in a peculiar manner, appropriated to the Divine Majeſty. Are not the bodies of the ſaints the Almighty's property? Were they not once the objects of his *tender love*? Are they not ſtill the ſubjects of his *ſpecial care*? Has he not given commandment concerning the bones of his elect; and charged the ocean, and injoined the grave, to keep them until *that day*? When rocks bright with *gems*, or mountains rich with *mines*, are abandoned to the devouring flames; will not *theſe* be reſcued from the fiery ruin? Will not *theſe* be tranſlated into JEHOVAH's kingdom, and, conjointly with the ſoul, made "his jewels;" made "his peculiar treaſure;" made to ſhine as the brightneſs of the firmament, and as the ſtars for ever and ever?

Is not CHRIST *the LORD of our bodies*? Are they not bought with a price? Bought, not with corruptible things, ſilver and gold, but with his divinely precious blood. And, if the bleſſed JESUS obtained the redemption of our bodies, at ſo infinitely dear a rate; can it enter into our hearts to conceive, that he ſhould diſlike to have them repoſed, under his own habitation?—Once more; Are not the bodies of the faithful, *temples of the Holy Ghoſt*? And is there not, upon this ſuppoſition, an apparent *propriety*, rather than the leaſt *indecorum*; in remitting theſe temples of fleſh to the temples made with hands? They are veſſels of honour; inſtruments of righteouſneſs; and, even when broken by death, like the fragments of a golden bowl, are valuable; are worthy to be laid up in the ſafeſt, moſt honourable repoſitories.

Upon the whole, ſince the LORD JESUS has purchaſed them, at the expence of his blood; and the bleſſed Spirit has honoured them, with his in-dwelling preſence; ſince they are right dear in the ſight of the adorable Trinity, and undoubted heirs of a glorious immortality: Why ſhould it be thought a thing improper, to admit them to a tranſient reſt, in their heavenly Father's houſe? Why may they not lie down and ſleep, in the *outer courts*; ſince they are ſoon to be introduced, into the *inmoſt manſions* of everlaſting honour and joy?

danger never threatens them, with her terrifying alarms; but *tranquillity* ſoftens their couch, and *ſafety* guards their repoſe.—Reſt then, ye precious relics, within this hoſpitable gloom. Reſt in gentle ſlumbers, till the laſt trumpet ſhall give the welcome ſignal; and ſound aloud, through all your ſilent manſions, "ariſe; "ſhine; for your light is come, and the glory of the "Lord is riſen upon you *."

To theſe, how *calm* was the *evening* of life! In what a ſmiling ſerenity, did their ſun go down! When their fleſh and their heart failed, how reviving was the remembrance of an all-ſufficient Redeemer; once dying for *their* ſins, now riſen again for *their* juſtification! How chearing the well-grounded hope of pardon for their tranſgreſſions, and peace with GOD, through JESUS CHRIST our Lord! How did this *aſſuage* the agonies, and *ſweeten* the bitterneſs of death?—Where now is wealth, with all her golden mountains? Where is honour, with her proud trophies of renown? Where are all the vain pomps of a deluded world? Can they inſpire *ſuch* comfort, can they adminiſter *any* ſupport, in this laſt extremity? Can *they* compoſe the affrighted thoughts? or buoy up the departing ſoul amidſt all the pangs of diſſolution?—The followers of the Lamb ſeem pleaſed and triumphant even at the laſt gaſp. "GOD's "everlaſting arms are underneath †" their fainting heads. His Spirit whiſpers peace and conſolation to their conſciences. In the ſtrength of theſe heavenly ſuccours, they quit the field, not *captives* but *conquerors*; with "hopes full of immortality."

And now they are gone.—The ſtruggles of reluctant nature are over. The body ſleeps in death: the ſoul launches into the inviſible ſtate.—But, who can imagine the delightful ſurpriſe, when they find themſelves ſurrounded by *guardian angels*, inſtead of *weeping friends?* How ſecurely do they wing their way, and paſs through unknown

* Iſa. lx. 1. † Deut. xxxiii. 27.

unknown worlds, under the conduct of thoſe celeſtial guides!—The vale of tears is quite loſt. Farewel, for ever, the realms of woe, and range of malignant beings! They arrive on the *frontiers* of inexpreſſible *felicity*. They "are come to the city of the living GOD:" while a voice, ſweeter than muſic in her ſofteſt ſtrains; ſweet as the harmony of hymning ſeraphim; congratulates their arrival, and beſpeaks their admiſſion: *lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlaſting doors*; that the heirs of glory may enter in.

Here, then, let us leave the ſpirits and ſouls of the righteous; eſcaped from an entangling *wilderneſs*, and received into a *paradiſe* of delights! Eſcaped from the territories of diſquietude, and ſettled in regions of unmoleſted ſecurity! Here, they ſit down with *Abraham*, *Iſaac*, and *Jacob*, in the kingdom of their Father. Here, they mingle with an innumerable company of angels, and rejoice around the throne of the Lamb: rejoice in the *fruition* of *preſent* felicity, and in the *aſſured expectation* of an inconceivable addition to their bliſs; *when GOD ſhall call the heavens from above, and the earth, that he may judge his people* *.

Fools *accounted their life madneſs, and their end to be without honour: but, they are numbered among the children of GOD; and their lot*, their diſtinguiſhed and eternal lot, *is among the ſaints* †! However, therefore, an undiſcerning world may *deſpiſe*, and a profane world *vilify*, the

* *Seneca*'s reflections upon the ſtate of humble ſouls, delivered from the burden of the fleſh, are ſparkling and fine; yet very *indiſtinct* and *empty*, compared with the particulars mentioned above, and with many others that might be collected from Scripture. *In hoc tam præcelſo, & in omnes tempeſtates expoſito navigantibus mari, nullus portus, niſi mortis eſt. Ne itaque invideris fratri tuo; quieſcit. Tandem, liber, tandem tutus, tandem æternus eſt. Fruitur nunc aperto & libero cælo; ex humili & depreſſo, in eum emicuit locum, qui ſolutas vinculis anima beato recipit ſinu; & nunc omnia rerum natura bona cum ſumma voluptate percipit.* SEN. ad Polyb.

† Wiſdom v. 4, 5.

the truly religious; be this the ſupreme, the invariable deſire of my heart! "Let me live the life, and die the "death, of the righteous. Oh! let my latter end, and "future ſtate, be like theirs!"

What figure is that, which ſtrikes my eye, from an eminent part of the wall? It is not only placed in a more *elevated ſituation*, than the reſt; but carries a more ſplendid and *ſumptuous air*, than ordinary. Swords and ſpears; murdering engines, and inſtruments of ſlaughter; adorn the ſtone with a formidable magnificence.—It proves to be the monument of a noble warrior.

Is ſuch reſpect, thought I, paid to the memory of this brave ſoldier, for ſacrificing his life to the *public good?*—Then, what honours, what immortal honours, are due to the great Captain of our ſalvation? Who, though Lord of the angelic legions; and ſupreme commander of all the heavenly hoſts; willingly offered himſelf a *bleeding* propitiation for *ſinners!*

The one died, being a *mortal*; and only yielded up a life, which was long before forfeited to divine juſtice; which muſt ſoon have been ſurrendered as a debt to nature, if it had not fallen as a prey to war.—But CHRIST took fleſh, and gave up the ghoſt, though he was the great I AM; the fountain of exiſtence; who calls happineſs and immortality all his own. He, who thought it no robbery to be *equal with God*; he, whoſe outgoings were *from everlaſting*; even he, was made in the likeneſs of man, and cut off out of the land of the living. Wonder, O heavens! Be aſtoniſhed, O earth! HE died the death, of whom it is witneſſed, that he is "the true "GOD, and eternal life*."

The one *expoſed* himſelf to peril, in the ſervice of his *ſovereign* and his *country*; which, though it was glorious to do, yet would have been ignominious, in ſuch

E circum-

* 1 John v. 20.

circumſtances, to have declined.—But CHRIST took the field, though he was the *bleſſed* and *only potentate*; the KING of Kings, and LORD of Lords. CHRIST took the field, though he was *ſure* to *drop* in the engagement; and put on the harneſs, though he knew beforehand, that it muſt reek with his blood. That Prince of heaven reſigned his royal perſon, not barely to the hazard, but to the inevitable ſtroke; to death, certain in it's approach, and armed with all it's horrors.—And for *whom?* Not for thoſe who were in any degree deſerving; but for his own *diſobedient creatures:* for the pardon of condemned malefactors; for a band of rebels, a race of traitors, the moſt obnoxious and inexcuſable of all criminals. Whom he might have left to periſh in their iniquities, without the leaſt impeachment of his goodneſs; and to the diſplay of his avenging juſtice.

The one, 'tis probable, died *expeditiouſly*; was ſuddenly wounded, and ſoon ſlain. A bullet, lodged in his heart; a ſword, ſheathed in his breaſt; or a battle-ax, cleaving the brain; might put a ſpeedy end to his miſery; diſpatch him "as in a moment."—Whereas, the divine Redeemer expired in tedious and protracted torments. His pangs were as *lingering*, as they were *exquiſite*. Even in the prelude to his laſt ſuffering, what a load of ſorrows overwhelmed his ſacred humanity! till the intolerable preſſure wrung blood, inſtead of ſweat, from every pore: till the crimſon flood ſtained all his raiment, and tinged the very ſtones.—But, when the laſt ſcene of the tragedy commenced; when the executioner's hammer had nailed him to the croſs; O! how many *diſmal hours*, did that illuſtrious ſufferer hang; a ſpectacle of woe to GOD, to angels, and to men! his temples mangled with the thorny crown! his hands and feet cleft with the rugged irons! his whole body covered

covered with wounds and bruiſes! and his ſoul, his very ſoul, pierced with pangs of unutterable diſtreſs!

So long he hung, that nature, through all her dominions, was thrown into ſympathizing commotions. The *earth* could no longer ſuſtain ſuch barbarous indignities, without trembling; nor the *ſun* behold them, without horror. Nay, ſo long did he hang in this extremity of agony and torture, that the alarm reached even the remote *regions* of the *dead*.—Never, O my ſoul, never forget the amazing truth. The Lamb of GOD was ſeized; was bound; was ſlaughtered with the utmoſt inhumanity; and endured death, in all it's bitterneſs, for thee. His murderers, ſtudiouſly cruel, ſo guided the fatal cup; that he taſted *every drop* of it's gall, before he drank it off to the *very dregs*.

Once again; The warrior died like a *hero*, and fell gallantly in the field of battle.—But, died not CHRIST *as a fool dieth* * ? Not on the bed of honour, with ſcars of glory in his breaſt; but, like ſome execrable miſcreant, on a *gibbet*; with laſhes of the vile ſcourge on his back. Yes, the bleſſed JESUS bowed his expiring head on the accurſed tree; ſuſpended between heaven and earth, as an outcaſt from both, and unworthy of either.

What ſuitable returns of inflamed and adoring devotion can we make to the Holy One of GOD; thus dying, that we might live; dying in ignominy and anguiſh; that we might live for ever in the heights of joy, and ſit for ever on thrones of glory.—Alas! it is not in *us*, impotent, inſenſible mortals, to be duly thankful. *He* only, who confers ſuch inconceivably rich favours, can enkindle a proper warmth of grateful affection. Then build thyſelf a *monument*, moſt gracious IMMANUEL, build thyſelf an everlaſting monument of *gratitude* in our ſouls. Inſcribe the memory of thy matchleſs bene-

* 2 *Sam.* iii. 33. Of this indignity our LORD complains; *Are ye come out as againſt a thief?* Matt. xxvi. 55.

ficence, not with ink and pen; but with that precious *blood*, which guſhed from thy wounded veins. Engrave it, not with the hammer and chizel; but with that ſharpened *ſpear*, which pierced thy ſacred ſide. Let it ſtand conſpicuous and indelible, not on outward tables of ſtone; but on the very inmoſt *tables* of our *hearts*.

One thing more let me obſerve, before I bid adieu to this entombed warrior, and his garniſhed ſepulchre. How mean are theſe oſtentatious methods, of *bribing* the *vote* of fame, and puchaſing a little poſthumous renown! What a poor ſubſtitute for a ſet of memorable actions, is poliſhed alabaſter, or the mimicry of ſculptured marble! The real excellency of this * bleeding patriot, is written on the minds of his countrymen. It would be remembered with applauſe, ſo long as the nation ſubſiſts, without this artificial expedient to perpetuate it.—And ſuch, ſuch is the monument, I would wiſh for myſelf. Let me leave a memorial, in the breaſts of my fellow-creatures. Let ſurviving friends bear witneſs; that I have not lived to myſelf alone, nor been altogether unſerviceable in my generation. O! let an uninterrupted ſeries of beneficent offices, be the *inſcription:* and the beſt intereſts of my acquaintance, the *plate* that exhibits it.

Let

* Sir *Bevil Granville*, ſlain in the civil wars, at an engagement with the rebels.—It may poſſibly be ſome entertainment to the reader, if I ſubjoin Sir *Bevil*'s character; as it is drawn by that celebrated pen, which wrote the hiſtory of thoſe calamitous times.—"That "which would have clouded any victory, *ſays the noble hiſtorian*, "and made the loſs of others leſs ſpoken of, was the death of Sir "*Bevil Granville*. He was indeed an excellent perſon, whoſe activity, intereſt, and reputation, were the foundation of what had "been done in *Cornwall*: his temper and affections ſo public, that "no accident which happened, could make any impreſſion upon "him: and his example kept others from taking any thing ill, or "at leaſt ſeeming to do ſo. In a word, a brighter courage, and a "gentler diſpoſition, were never married together, to make the moſt "chearful and innocent converſation."

CLAR. *Hiſt. Reb.* Vol. II.

Let the *poor*, as they paſs by my grave, point at the little ſpot, and thankfully acknowledge—"There lies "the man, whoſe unwearied kindneſs was the conſtant "relief of my various diſtreſſes; who tenderly viſited "my languiſhing bed, and readily ſupplied my indigent "circumſtances. How often were his counſels, a guide "to my perplexed thoughts, and a cordial to my de- "jected ſpirit! 'Tis owing to GOD's bleſſing, on his "ſeaſonable charities, and prudent conſolations; that "I now live, and live in comfort."—Let a perſon, once *ignorant* and *ungodly*, lift up his eyes to heaven, and ſay within himſelf, as he walks over my bones; "Here are "the laſt remains of that ſincere friend, who *watched* "*for my ſoul*. I can never forget, with what heedleſs "gaiety, I was poſting on in the paths of perdition: and "I tremble to think into what irretrievable ruin I "might quickly have been plunged; had not his faith- "ful admonitions arreſted me in the wild career. I "was unacquainted with the goſpel of peace, and had "no concern for it's unſearchable treaſures; but now, "enlightened by his *inſtructive converſation*, I ſee the "all-ſufficiency of my Saviour; and, animated by his "*repeated exhortations*; I count all things but loſs, that "I may win CHRIST. Methinks, his diſcourſes, ſea- "ſoned with religion, and ſet home by the divine Spi- "rit, ſtill tingle in my ears; are ſtill warm on my "heart; and, I truſt, will be more and more operative, "till we meet each other in the houſe not made with "hands, eternal in the heavens."

The only *infallible* way of immortalizing our cha- racters; a way equally open to the meaneſt and moſt ex- alted fortune; is, "to make our calling and elec- "tion ſure;" to gain ſome ſweet evidence, that our *names are written in heaven*. Then, however they may be diſregarded or forgotten, among men; they will not fail to be had in everlaſting remembrance before the Lord.—This is, of all diſtinctions, far the nobleſt.

Ambition, be this thy object, and every page of ſcripture will ſanctify thy paſſion; even grace itſelf will fan thy flame.—As to earthly memorials, yet a little while, and they are all obliterated. The tongue of thoſe, whoſe happineſs we have zealouſly promoted, muſt ſoon be ſilent in the coffin. Characters cut with a pen of iron, and committed to the ſolid rock, will ere long ceaſe to be legible*. But as many as are inrolled "in "the Lamb's book of life," He himſelf declares, ſhall never be blotted out from thoſe annals of eternity†. When a flight of years has mouldered the triumphal column into duſt; when the brazen ſtatue periſhes, under the corroding hand of time: *thoſe honours* ſtill continue; ſtill are blooming and incorruptible, in the world of glory.

Make the extended ſkies your tomb;
Let ſtars record your worth:
Yet know, vain mortals, all muſt die,
As nature's *ſickliest birth*.

Would bounteous heav'n indulge my pray'r,
I frame a nobler choice;
Nor, living, wiſh the pompous pile!
Nor, dead, regret the loſs.

In thy fair *book of life* divine,
My God, inſcribe my name:
There let it fill ſome humble place,
Beneath the ſlaughter'd Lamb.

Thy ſaints, while ages roll away,
In endleſs fame ſurvive;
Their glories, o'er the wrongs of time
Greatly triumphant, live.

Yonder entrance leads, I ſuppoſe, to the *vault*. Let me turn aſide, and take one view of the habitation, and

* —*Data ſunt ipſis quoque fata ſepulchris.* Juv.

† Rev. iii. 5.

and it's tenants.—The ſullen *door* grates upon it's hinges: not uſed to receive many viſitants, it admits me with reluctance and murmurs.—What meaneth this *ſudden trepidation*; while I deſcend the ſteps, and am viſiting the pale nations of the dead?—Be compoſed, my ſpirits; there is nothing to fear, in theſe quiet chambers. "Here, even the wicked ceaſe from trou-"bling."

Good heavens! what a ſolemn ſcene!—How diſmal the *gloom!* Here is perpetual darkneſs, and night even at noon-day.—How doleful the *ſolitude!* Not one trace of chearful ſociety; but ſorrow and terror ſeem to have made this, their dreaded abode.—Hark! how the hollow dome reſounds, at every tread. The *echoes*, that long have ſlept, are awakened; and lament, and ſigh, along the walls.

A beam, or two, finds it's way through the grates; and reflects a feeble glimmer, from the nails of the *coffins*. So many of thoſe ſad ſpectacles, half concealed in ſhades; half ſeen dimly by the baleful twilight; add a deeper horror to theſe gloomy manſions.—I pore upon the inſcriptions, and am juſt able to pick out; that theſe are the remains of the rich and renowned. No vulgar dead are depoſited here. The *moſt illuſtrious*, and *right honourable*, have claimed this for their laſt retreat. And, indeed, they retain ſomewhat of a ſhadowy pre-eminence. They lie, ranged in mournful order, and in a ſort of ſilent pomp, under the arches of an ample ſepulchre: while meaner corpſes, without much ceremony, "go down to the ſtones of the pit."

My apprehenſions recover from their ſurpriſe. I find, here are no phantoms, but ſuch as fear raiſes.—However, it ſtill amazes me, to obſerve the wonders of this nether world. Thoſe, who received vaſt revenues, and called whole lordſhips their own; are here reduced to half a dozen feet of earth, or confined in a few

ſheets

ſheets of *lead*. Rooms of ſtate, and ſumptuous furniture, are reſigned; for no other ornament than the *ſhroud*, for no other apartment than the darkſome *niche*. —Where is the ſtar, that blazed upon the breaſt; or coronet, that glittered round the temples? The only remains of departed dignity are, the weather-beaten hatchment, and the tattered eſcutcheon. I ſee no ſplendid retinue, ſurrounding this ſolitary dwelling. The lordly equipage hovers no longer about the lifeleſs maſter. He has no other attendant, than a duſty *ſtatue*; which, while the regardleſs world is as gay as ever, the ſculptor's hand has taught to weep.

Thoſe, who gloried in high-born anceſtors, and *noble pedigree*; here drop, their lofty pretenſions. They acknowledge kindred with creeping things, and *quarter arms* with the meaneſt reptiles. *They ſay to corruption, thou art my father; and to the worm, thou art my mother and my ſiſter.*—Or, ſhould they ſtill aſſume the ſtile of diſtinction, ah! how impotent were the claim! how apparent the oſtentation! Is it ſaid by their monument? HERE LIES THE GREAT. How eaſily is it replied by the ſpectator!

— — — Falſe marble! where?
Nothing but poor and ſordid duſt lies here.

Mortifying truth! ſufficient, one would think, to wean the moſt ſanguine appetite, from this tranſitory ſtate of things; from it's ſickly ſatisfactions, it's fading glories, it's vaniſhing treaſures.

For now, ye *lying vanities* of life!
Ye ever-tempting, ever-cheating train!
Where are ye NOW? And what is your amount?

What is all the world, to theſe poor breathleſs beings?—What are their *pleaſures?* A bubble broke.—What their *honours?* A dream that is forgotten.—What the

the ſum total of their *enjoyments* below? Once, perhaps, it appeared to inexperienced and fond deſire, ſomething conſiderable. But, now death has meaſured it with his line, and weighed it in his ſcale, what is the upſhot? Alas! it is ſhorter than a ſpan; lighter than the dancing ſpark: and driven away like the diſſolving ſmoke.

Indulge, my ſoul, a ſerious pauſe. Recollect all the *gay things*; that were wont to dazzle thy eyes, and inveigle thy affections. Here, examine thoſe baits of ſenſe. Here, form an eſtimate of their *real value*. Suppoſe thyſelf firſt, among the favourites of fortune; who revel in the lap of pleaſure; who ſhine in the robes of honour; and ſwim in tides of inexhauſted riches. Yet how ſoon would the paſſing bell proclaim thy exit! And, when once that iron call, has ſummoned thee to thy future reckoning; where would all theſe gratifications be? At that period, how will all the pageantry of the moſt affluent, ſplendid, or luxurious circumſtances, vaniſh into empty air!—And is *this* a happineſs, ſo paſſionately to be coveted?

I thank you, ye relics of ſounding titles, and magnificent names. Ye have taught me more of the littleneſs of the world, than all the volumes of my library. Your nobility arrayed in a winding-ſheet; your grandeur mouldering in an urn; are the moſt indiſputable proofs, of the *nothingneſs* of created things. Never, ſurely, did providence write this important point, in ſuch legible characters; as in the aſhes of *my lord*, or on the corpſe of *his grace* *.—Let others, if they pleaſe, pay their obſequious court to your wealthy ſons; and ignobly fawn, or anxiouſly ſue, for preferments. My thoughts ſhall often reſort, in penſive contemplation, to the ſepulchres of their ſires; and learn, from their ſleeping duſt—to *moderate* my expectations from mortals—to ſtand *diſengaged* from every undue attachment, to

* ——— *Mors ſola fatetur*
Quantula ſint hominum corpuſcula.— JUV.

to the little intereſts of time—to get above the deluſive amuſements of honour; the gaudy tinſels of wealth; and all the empty ſhadows of a periſhing world.

Hark! what *ſound* is that!—In ſuch a ſituation, every noiſe alarms.—Solemn and ſlow, it breaks again upon the ſilent air.—'Tis the ſtriking of the clock. Deſigned, one would imagine, to ratify all my ſerious meditations. Methinks, it ſays *amen*, and ſets a ſeal, to every improving hint. It tells me; that another portion of my appointed time, is elapſed. One calls it, "the knell of my departed hours." 'Tis the watch-word to vigilance and activity. It cries in the ear of reaſon; "redeem the time. Catch the favourable "*gales* of *opportunity*: O! catch them, while they "breathe; before they are irrecoverably loſt. The "ſpan of life ſhortens continually. Thy minutes are "all upon the wing, and haſtening to be gone. Thou "art a borderer upon eternity; and making inceſſant "advances to the ſtate thou art contemplating." May the admonition ſink deep, into an attentive and obedient mind! May it teach me that *heavenly arithmetic*, of "numbering my days, and applying my heart unto "wiſdom!"

I have often walked beneath the impending promontory's craggy cliff; I have ſometimes trod the vaſt ſpaces of the lonely deſart; and penetrated the inmoſt receſſes of the dreary cavern: but never, never beheld nature louring, with ſo *tremendous* a form; never felt ſuch impreſſions of *awe*, ſtriking cold on my heart; as under theſe black-browed arches, amidſt theſe mouldy walls, and ſurrounded by ſuch rueful objects. Where melancholy, deepeſt melancholy, for ever ſpreads her raven wings.—Let me now emerge from the damp and dreadful obſcurity.—Farewel, ye ſeats of deſolation, and ſhades of death! Gladly I re-viſit the realms of day.

Having

Having caſt a *ſuperficial* view, upon theſe receptacles of the dead; curioſity prompts my inquiry to a more *intimate* ſurvey. Could we draw back the covering of the tomb; could we diſcern, what thoſe are now, who once were mortals—O! how would it ſurpriſe, and grieve us! *Surpriſe* us, to behold the prodigious tranſformation, which has taken place on every individual; *grieve* us, to obſerve the diſhonour done to our nature in general, within theſe ſubterraneous lodgments!

Here, the ſweet and winning *aſpect*, that wore perpetually an attractive ſmile; grins horribly a naked, ghaſtly ſkull.—The *eye*, that outſhone the diamond's brilliancy; and glanced it's lovely lightning, into the moſt guarded heart: Alas! where is it? Where ſhall we find the rolling ſparkler? How are all it's ſprightly beams eclipſed! totally eclipſed!—The *tongue*, that once commanded all the power of eloquence, in this ſtrange land, has "forgot it's cunning." Where are now thoſe ſtrains of harmony, which raviſhed our ears? Where is that flow of perſuaſion, which carried captive our judgments? The great maſter of language and of ſong, is become ſilent as the night that ſurrounds him.—The pampered *fleſh*, ſo lately cloathed in purple and fine linen, how is it covered rudely with clods of clay! There was a time, when the timorouſly nice creature, would ſcarce "* adventure to ſet a foot upon the "ground, for delicateneſs and tenderneſs;" but is now enwrapped in clammy earth, and ſleeps on no ſofter a pillow than the ragged gravel-ſtones.—Here, "the "*ſtrong men* bow themſelves." The nervous arm is unſtrung; the brawny ſinews are relaxed; the limbs, not long ago the ſeats of vigour and activity, lie down motionleſs; and the bones, which were as bars of iron, are crumbled into duſt.

Here, the *man* of *buſineſs* forgets all his favourite ſchemes, and diſcontinues the purſuit of gain. Here, is

* Deut. xxviii. 56.

is a total ſtand to the circulation of merchandize, and the hurry of trade. In theſe ſolitary receſſes; as in the building of *Solomon*'s temple; is heard no ſound of the hammer and ax. The winding-ſheet, and the coffin, are the utmoſt bound of all earthly devices. "Hitherto "may they go, but no farther."—Here, the *ſons* of *pleaſure* take a final farewel, of their dear delights. No more is the ſenſualiſt anointed with oil, or crowned with roſe-buds. He chants no more to the melody of the viol; nor revels any longer, at the banquet of wine. Inſtead of ſumptuous tables, and delicious treats, the poor voluptuary is himſelf a feaſt for fattened inſects; the reptile riots in his fleſh; "the worm feeds ſweetly "on him *."—Here alſo, *beauty* fails; bright beauty drops her luſtre here. O! how her roſes fade, and her lilies languiſh in this bleak ſoil! How does the grand leveller pour contempt, upon the charmer of our hearts! How turn to deformity, what captivated the world before.

Could the *lover* have a ſight of his once inchanting fair-one; what a ſtartling aſtoniſhment would ſeize him!—"Is this the object, I not long ago ſo paſſion-"ately admired! I ſaid, ſhe was divinely fair; and "thought her ſomewhat more than mortal. Her form, "was ſymmetry itſelf; every elegance breathed in her "air; and all the graces waited on her motions.—"'Twas muſic, when ſhe ſpoke; but, when ſhe ſpoke "encouragement, 'twas littte leſs than rapture. How "my heart danced, to thoſe charming accents!—And "can that, which, ſome weeks ago, was to admiration "*lovely*, be now ſo inſufferably *loathſome*?—Where are "thoſe bluſhing cheeks? Where the coral lips? Where "that ivory neck, on which the curling jet, in ſuch "gloſſy ringlets, flowed? With a thouſand other beau-"ties of perſon, and ten thouſand delicacies of ac-"tion?

* Job xxiv. 20.

" tion* ?— Amazing alteration! Deluſory bliſs! —
" Fondly I gazed upon the glittering *meteor*. It ſhone
" brightly; and I miſtook it for a *ſtar*; for a permanent
" and ſubſtantial good. But how is it fallen! fallen
" from an orb, not it's own! And all that I can trace
" on earth, is but a *putrid maſs*."

Lie, poor *Florella!* lie deep, as thou doſt, in obſcure darkneſs. Let night, with her impenetrable ſhades, always conceal thee. May no prying eye, be witneſs to thy diſgrace: but let thy *ſurviving ſiſters* think upon thy ſtate; when they contemplate the idol in the glaſs. When the pleaſing image riſes gracefully to view, ſurrounded with a world of charms; and fluſhed with joy, at the conſciouſneſs of them all—then, in thoſe minutes of temptation and danger, when vanity uſes to ſteal into the thoughts—then, let them remember, what a *veil* of *horror* is drawn over a face; which was once beautiful and brilliant, as theirs. Such a ſeaſonable reflection, might regulate the labours of the toilet; and create a more earneſt ſolicitude, to poliſh the *jewel*, than to varniſh the *caſket*. It might then become their higheſt ambition, to have the mind decked with divine virtues; and dreſſed after the amiable pattern of their Redeemer's holineſs.

And would this prejudice their perſons, or depreciate their charms?— Quite the reverſe. It would ſpread a ſort of heavenly glory, over the fineſt *ſet of features*; and heighten the lovelineſs of every other engaging accompliſhment.—What is yet a more inviting conſideration; theſe flowers would not wither with nature, nor be tarniſhed by time; but would open continually into richer beauties, and *flouriſh* even in the *winter* of age.— But, the moſt incomparable recommendation of theſe

F noble

* *Quo fugit Venus? Heu! Quove color? decens*
Quo motus? Quid habet illius, illius,
Quæ ſpirabat amores,
Quæ me ſurpuerat mihi? HOR.

noble qualities, is; that from their hallowed relics, as from the fragrant aſhes of the *Phœnix*, will ere long ariſe an illuſtrious form; bright as the wings of angels; laſting, as the light of the new *Jeruſalem*.

For my part; the remembrance of this ſad revolution, ſhall make me *aſhamed* to pay my devotion, to a ſhrine of periſhing fleſh; and *afraid*, to expect all my happineſs, from ſo brittle a joy. It ſhall teach me, not to think too highly of well-proportioned clay; though formed in the moſt elegant mould, and animated with the ſweeteſt ſoul. 'Tis heaven's laſt, beſt, and crowning gift; to be received with *gratitude*, and cheriſhed with *love*, as a moſt valuable bleſſing; not worſhipped, with the incenſe of flattery, and ſtrains of fulſome adoration as a goddeſs.—It will cure, I truſt, the *dotage* of my *eyes:* and incline me always to prefer the ſubſtantial "ornaments of a meek and virtuous ſpirit;" before the tranſient decorations, of white and red on the ſkin.

Here, I called in my roving meditations, from their long excurſion on this tender ſubject. Fancy liſtened a while to the ſoliloquy of a lover. Now judgment reſumes the reins, and guides my thoughts to more near and ſelf-intereſting inquiries.—However, upon a review of the whole ſcene; crouded with *ſpectacles* of *mortality*, and *trophies* of *death*; I could not forbear ſmiting my breaſt, and fetching a ſigh, and lamenting over the nobleſt of all viſible beings, laid proſtrate under the feet of "the pale horſe, and his rider *."—I could not forbear repeating that pathetic exclamation; "*Oh!* "*thou* † *Adam, what haſt thou done!*" What deſolation has thy diſobedience wrought in the earth!—See the malignity, the ruinous malignity of *ſin!* Sin, has demoliſhed ſo many ſtately ſtructures of fleſh: ſin, has made ſuch havock, among the moſt excellent ranks of God's

* Rev. vi. 8. † 2 Eſdr. vii. 41.

God's lower creation: and ſin (that deadly bane of our nature) would have plunged our better part, into the execrable horrors of the nethermoſt hell; had not our merciful Mediator interpoſed, and given himſelf for our ranſom.—Therefore, what grateful acknowledgments, does the whole world of *penitent* ſinners owe; what ardent returns of love, will a whole heaven of *glorified* believers pay; to ſuch a friend, benefactor, and deliverer!

Muſing upon theſe melancholy objects, a faithful remembrancer ſuggeſts from within—"Muſt this ſad "change ſucceed in *me* alſo? Am I to draw my laſt "gaſp; to become a breathleſs corpſe; and *be*, what I "*deplore* *? Is there a time approaching, when this "body ſhall be carried out upon the bier, and conſigned "to it's clay-cold bed? While ſome kind acquaintance, "perhaps, may drop one parting tear; and cry, alas! "my brother!—Is the time approaching?"—Nothing is more certain. A decree, much ſurer than the law of the *Medes* and *Perſians*, has irrevocably determined the doom.

Should one of theſe ghaſtly figures, burſt from his confinement; and ſtart up, in frightful deformity, before me—ſhould the *haggard ſkeleton*, lift a clattering hand; and point it full in my view—ſhould it open the ſtiffened jaws; and, with a hoarſe tremendous murmur, break this profound ſilence—ſhould it accoſt *me*, as *Samuel*'s apparition addreſſed the trembling king—"*The* "*Lord ſhall deliver* thee *alſo into the hands of death.* "*Yet a little while, and* thou *ſhalt be with me* †."—

* I paſs, with melancholy ſtate,
By all theſe ſolemn heaps of fate;
And think, as ſoft and ſad I tread
Above the venerable dead,
"Time was, like me, they life poſſeſs'd;
"And time will be, when I ſhall reſt." PARNEL.

† 1 *Sam.* xxviii. 19. On this place, the *Dutch* tranſlator of the Meditations has added a note; to correct, very probably, what he ſup-

The *ſolemn warning*, delivered in ſo ſtriking a manner, muſt ſtrongly impreſs my imagination. A meſſage in thunder, would ſcarce ſink deeper.—Yet, there is abundantly greater reaſon to be alarmed, by that expreſs declaration of the LORD GOD Almighty, "*Thou ſhalt "ſurely die.*"—Well then, ſince ſentence is paſſed; ſince I am a condemned man; and know not, when the dead warrant may arrive: let me die to *ſin*; and die to the *world*; before I die beneath the ſtroke of a righteous GOD. Let me employ the little uncertain interval of reſpite from execution; in preparing for a happier ſtate, and a better life. That, when the fatal moment comes, and I am commanded to ſhut my eyes, upon all things here below; I may open them again, to ſee my Saviour in the manſions above.

Since this body, which is ſo fearfully and wonderfully made, muſt fall to pieces in the grave: ſince I muſt ſoon reſign all my bodily powers to darkneſs, inactivity, and corruption, let it be my conſtant care to uſe them well, while I poſſeſs them!—Let my *hands* be ſtretched forth to relieve the needy; and always be more "ready "to give than to receive."—Let my *knees* bend, in deepeſt humiliation, before the throne of grace: while my *eyes* are caſt down to the earth, in penitential confuſion; or devoutly looking up to heaven, for pardoning mercy!—In every friendly interview, let the "law of "kindneſs dwell on my *lips*;" or rather, if the ſeriouſneſs of my acquaintance permits, let the goſpel of peace flow from my tongue. Oh! that I might be enabled, in every public concourſe, to lift up my voice like a trumpet;

ſuppoſes a miſtake. On the ſame ſuppoſition, I preſume, the compilers of our rubric ordered the laſt verſe of *Ecclus* xlvi. to be omitted, in the daily ſervice of the church. But that the ſentiment, hinted above, is ſtrictly true; that it was *(Samual eva) Samuel himſelf*, (not an infernal ſpirit, perſonating the prophet) who appeared to the female Necromancer at *Endor*; appeared, not in compliance with any diabolical incantation, but in purſuance of the divine commiſſion; this, I think, is fully proved in the *Hiſtorical Account of the Life of* David. Vol. I. chap. 23.

trumpet; and pour abroad a more joyful ſound, than it's moſt melodious accents, in proclaiming the glad tidings of free ſalvation!—Be ſhut, my *ears*, reſolutely ſhut, againſt the malevolent whiſpers of ſlander, and the contagious breath of filthy talking. But be ſwift to hear the inſtructions of wiſdom; be all attention, when your REDEEMER ſpeaks; imbibe the precious truths; and convey them carefully to the heart.—Carry me, my *feet*, to the temple of the Lord; to the beds of the ſick; and houſes of the poor.—May all my members, devoted intirely to my divine Maſter, be the willing inſtruments of promoting his glory!

Then, ye embalmers, you may ſpare your pains. Theſe works of faith, and labours of love; theſe ſhall be my *ſpices* and *perfumes*. Enwrapped in theſe, I would lay me gently down, and ſleep ſweetly in the bleſſed JESUS; hoping, that GOD will "give commandment "concerning my bones;" and one day fetch them up from the duſt, as ſilver from the furnace, purified, "I "ſay not, ſeven times, but ſeventy times ſeven."

Here, my contemplation took wing; and, in an inſtant, alighted in the garden, adjoining to mount *Calvary*. Having viewed the abode of my deceaſed fellow-creatures; methought, I longed to ſee the place, where our Lord lay.—And, oh! what a marvellous ſpectacle was once exhibited in this memorable ſepulchre! *He* "who cloaths himſelf with light, as with a garment; "and walks upon the wings of the wind*;" HE was pleaſed to wear the habiliments of *mortality*, and dwelt

* The ſcriptures, ſpeaking of the ſupreme Being, ſay—*He walketh upon the waves of the ſea*; to denote his uncontroulable power, *Job* ix. 8.—*He walketh in the circuit of heaven*; to expreſs the immenſity of his preſence, *Job* xxii. 14.—*He walketh upon the wings of the wind*; to ſignify the amazing ſwiftneſs of his operations, *Pſalm* civ. 3.—In which laſt phraſe, there is, I think, an elegance and emphaſis, not taken notice of by our commentators, yet unequalled in any writer.—Not, He *flieth*; He *runneth*; but, He *walketh*: and that, on the *very wings* of the wind; on the moſt impetuous of elements, roufed

among the *proſtrate* dead.—Who can repeat the wondrous truth too often? Who can dwell upon the tranſporting theme, too long? HE, who ſits inthroned in glory, and diffuſes bliſs among all the heavenly hoſts; HE was once a pale and bloody corpſe, and preſſed this little ſpot.

O Death! how great was thy triumph in that hour! Never did thy gloomy realms contain *ſuch* a priſoner before.—*Priſoner*, did I ſay? No; he was more than conqueror. He aroſe, far more mightily than *Samſon*, from a tranſient ſlumber; broke down the gates, and demoliſhed the ſtrong-holds, of thoſe dark dominions.—And this, O mortals, this is your only *conſolation* and *ſecurity*. JESUS has trod the dreadful path, and ſmoothed it for your paſſage.—JESUS, ſleeping in the chambers of the tomb, has brightened the diſmal manſion, and left an inviting odour, in thoſe beds of duſt. The dying JESUS! (Never let the comforting truth depart from your minds! The dying JESUS) is your ſure *protection*, your unqueſtionable *paſſport*, through the territories of the grave. Believe in him; and they ſhall prove a "highway to *Sion*;" ſhall tranſmit you ſafe to paradiſe. Believe in him; and you ſhall be no loſers, but unſpeakable gainers, by your diſſolution. For, hear what the oracle of heaven ſays, upon this important point: *whoſo believeth in me, ſhall never die* *.—What ſublime, and emphatical language, is this! Thus much, at leaſt, it muſt

rouſed into it's utmoſt rage, and ſweeping along with inconceivable rapidity.—A tumult in nature, not to be deſcribed, is the *compoſed* and *ſedate* work of the DEITY. A ſpeed, not to be meaſured, is (with reverence I uſe the expreſſion, and to comport with our low methods of conception) the *ſolemn* and *majeſtic foot-pace* of JEHOVAH. —How *flat* are the following lines, even in the great maſter of lyric ſong,

Ocyor Cervis, & agente Nimbos
Ocyor Euro,

when compared with this inimitable ſtroke of divine poetry!—He *walketh* upon the *wings* of the *wind*.

* John xi. 26.

muſt import—" The nature of that laſt change, ſhall " be ſurpriſingly altered, for the better. It ſhall no " longer be *inflicted*, as a puniſhment; but rather be " *vouchſafed*, as a bleſſing. To ſuch perſons, it ſhall " come attended, with ſuch a train of benefits, as will " render it a kind of happy impropriety to call it dying. " Dying! No; 'tis then they *truly* begin to *live*. Their " exit, is the end of their frailty, and their entrance " upon perfection. Their laſt groan, is the prelude to " life and immortality."

O ye timorous ſouls, that are terrified at the ſound of the paſſing bell; that turn pale, at the ſight of an opened grave; and can ſcarce behold a coffin or a ſkull, without a ſhuddering horror: ye that are *in bondage* to the griſly tyrant, and tremble at the ſhaking of his iron rod; cry mightily to the Father of your ſpirits, for *faith* in his dear Son. Faith, will free you from your ſlavery*. Faith, will embolden you to tread on (this fierceſt of) ſerpents †. Old *Simeon*, claſping the child JESUS in the arms of his fleſh, and the glorious Mediator

* Death's terror is the mountain *faith* removes:
'Tis *faith* diſarms deſtruction.—
Believe, and look with triumph on the tomb.

Theſe, and ſome other quotations, I am proud to borrow from the *Night-Thoughts*, eſpecially from *Night* the *Fourth*. In which, energy of language, ſublimity of ſentiment, and the moſt exquiſite beauties of poetry, are the *leaſt* perfections to be admired. Almoſt every line glows with devotion; riſes into the moſt exalted apprehenſions of the adorable Redeemer; and is animated with the moſt lively faith in His all-ſufficient mediation. The author of this excellent performance has the peculiar felicity, of ennobling all the ſtrength of ſtile, and every delicacy of imagination, with the grand and diſtinguiſhing truths of Chriſtianity. Theſe thoughts give the higheſt entertainment to the fancy; and impart the nobleſt improvement to the mind. They not only refine our taſte, but prepare us for death, and ripen us for glory. I never take up this admirable piece, but I am ready to cry out—*Tecum vivere amem, tecum obeam libens*; i. e. " Inſpire me with ſuch a ſpirit, and life ſhall be delightful, nor death " itſelf unwelcome."

† Luke x. 19.

ator in the arms of his faith, departs with tranquillity and peace. That bitter perſecutor *Saul*, having won CHRIST; being found in CHRIST; longs to be diſmiſſed from cumbrous clay, and kindles into rapture at the proſpect of diſſolution *. Methinks, I ſee another of IMMANUEL'S followers, truſting in his Saviour; leaning on his beloved; go down to the ſilent ſhades, with compoſure and alacrity †.— In this powerful name, an innumerable company of ſinful creatures have ſet up their banners; and "overcome, through the blood of "the Lamb." Authoriſed by the Captain of thy ſalvation, *thou* alſo mayſt ſet thy feet upon the neck of this king of terrors. Furniſhed with this antidote, *thou* alſo mayſt play around the hole of the aſp, and put thy undaunted hand on this cockatrice-den ‡. Thou mayſt feel the viper § faſtening to thy mortal part, and *fear* no *evil:* thou ſhalt one day ſhake it off by a joyful reſurrection, and *ſuffer* no *harm*.

Reſurrection! That chearing word eaſes my mind of an anxious thought, and ſolves a moſt momentous queſtion. I was going to aſk; "Wherefore do all theſe "corpſes lie here, in this abject condition? Is this "their final ſtate? Has death conquered? and will the "tyrant hold captivity captive? How long wilt thou "forget them, O Lord? for ever?"—No, ſaith the voice from heaven, the word of divine revelation; *the righteous* are all "*priſoners of hope* ||." There is an hour (an awful ſecret that, and known only to all-foreſeeing wiſdom) an appointed hour there is, when an act of grace will paſs the great ſeal above, and give them an univerſal diſcharge; a general delivery from the abodes of corruption.—Then, ſhall the LORD JESUS deſcend from heaven, with the ſhout of the archangel, and the trump of GOD. *Deſtruction* itſelf ſhall hear his call, and the obedient *grave* give up her dead. In

* Phil. i. 23. 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. † 2 Pet. i. 14. ‡ Iſa. xi. 8.
§ Acts xxviii. 35. || Zech. ix. 12.

a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, they ſhake off the ſleep of ten thouſand years; and ſpring forth, like the bounding roe, to "meet their LORD in the air."

And, O! with what cordial congratulations; what tranſporting endearments; do the ſoul and body, thoſe affectionate companions, re-unite! But, with how much greater demonſtrations of kindneſs, are they *both* received, by their compaſſionate Redeemer! The Antient of days, who comes in the clouds of heaven, is their friend; their father; their bridegroom. He comes with irreſiſtible power and infinite glory; but they have nothing to fear from his majeſtic appearance. Thoſe *tremendous ſolemnities*, which ſpread deſolation and aſtoniſhment through the univerſe; ſerve only to inflame their love, and heighten their hopes. The Judge, the awful Judge, amidſt all his magnificence and ſplendor, vouchſafes to confeſs their names; vouchſafes to commemorate their fidelity, before all the inhabitants of the ſkies, and the whole aſſembled world.

Hark! the thunders are huſhed. See! the lightnings ceaſe their rage. The angelic armies ſtand in ſilent ſuſpence. The whole race of *Adam*, is wrapped in pleaſing, or anxious expectation.—And now, that adorable perſon, whoſe favour is better than life; whoſe acceptance is a crown of glory; lifts up the light of his countenance upon the righteous. He ſpeaks; and what raviſhing words proceed from his gracious lips! What ecſtacies of delight, they enkindle in the breaſts of the faithful!—"I accept you, O my people! Ye are "they, that believed in my name. Ye are they, that "renounced *yourſelves*, and are *complete in me*. I ſee no "ſpot or blemiſh in you; for ye are waſhed in my "blood, and cloathed with my righteouſneſs. Renew-"ed by my Spirit, ye have glorified me on earth, and "have been faithful unto death. Come, then, ye ſer-"vants of holineſs, enter into the joy of your LORD.

"Come,

"Come, ye children of light; ye bleſſed of my Fa-
"ther; receive the *kingdom*, that ſhall never be remov-
"ed; wear the *crown*, which fadeth not away; and en-
"joy *pleaſures* for evermore!"

Then, it will be one of the ſmalleſt privileges of the righteous, that they ſhall languiſh no more; that ſickneſs will never again ſhew her pale countenance, in their dwellings*. *Death itſelf* will be "ſwallowed up in "victory." That fatal javelin; which has drank the blood of monarchs, and finds it's way to the hearts of all the ſons of *Adam*; ſhall be utterly broken. That enormous ſcythe; which has ſtruck empires from their root, and ſwept ages and generations into oblivion; ſhall lie by in perpetual uſeleſſneſs. *Sin* alſo, which filled thy quiver, thou inſatiate archer!—Sin, which ſtrung thy arm with reſiſtleſs vigour—which pointed all thy ſhafts with inevitable deſtruction—Sin, will then be done away. Whatever is *frail*, or *depraved*, will be thrown off with our grave-cloaths. All to come is perfect holineſs, and conſummate happineſs; the term of whoſe continuance is eternity.

O *Eternity! Eternity!* How are our boldeſt, our ſtrongeſt thoughts, loſt and overwhelmed in thee! Who can ſet landmarks, to limit thy dimenſions; or find plumbets, to fathom thy depths? *Arithmaticians* have figures to compute all the progreſſions of time. *Aſtronomers* have inſtruments, to calculate the diſtances of the planets. But what numbers can ſtate, what lines can gauge, the lengths and breadths of eternity? "It is "higher than heaven; what canſt thou do? deeper than "hell;

* *Iſaiah*, ſpeaking of the new *Jeruſalem*, mentions this, as one of it's immunities; *The inhabitant thereof ſhall no more ſay, I am ſick.* Another clauſe, in it's royal charter, runs thus; *GOD ſhall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow, nor crying; neither ſhall there be any more pain.* Iſa. xxxiii. 24. Rev. xxi. 4.

"hell; what canſt thou know? The meaſure thereof, "is longer than the earth, broader than the ſea *."

Myſterious, mighty exiſtence! a ſum not to be leſſened by the largeſt *deductions!* An extent, not to be contracted by all poſſible *diminutions!* None can truly ſay, after the moſt prodigious waſte of ages; "So much "of eternity is gone." For, when millions of centuries are elapſed, it is but juſt commencing; and, when millions more have run their ample round, it will be no nearer ending. Yea, when ages, numerous as the bloom of ſpring; increaſed by the herbage of ſummer; both augmented by the leaves of autumn; and all multiplied by the drops of rain, which drown the winter—when theſe and ten thouſand times ten thouſand more—more than can be repreſented by any ſimilitude, or imagined by any conception—when all theſe are revolved and finiſhed; eternity, vaſt, boundleſs, amazing eternity, will *only* be *beginning!*

What a pleaſing, yet awful thought is this! Full of delight, and full of dread. O! may it alarm our *fears*; quicken our *hopes*; and animate all our *endeavours!* Since we are ſo ſoon to launch into this endleſs and inconceivable ſtate; let us give all diligence, to ſecure our entrance into bliſs.—*Now*, let us give all diligence; becauſe there is no alteration, in the ſcenes of futurity. The wheel never turns: all is ſtedfaſt and immoveable beyond the grave. Whether we are then ſeated on the throne, or ſtretched on the rack: a ſeal will be ſet to our condition, by the hand of everlaſting mercy, or inflexible juſtice.—The *Saints* always rejoice amidſt the ſmiles of heaven; their harps are perpetually tuned; their triumphs admit of no interruption.—The ruin of the *wicked* is irremediable. The fatal ſentence, once paſſed, is never to be repealed. No hope of exchanging

* Job xi. 8, 9.

ing their doleful habitations. But all things bear the ſame diſmal aſpect, for ever and ever.

The *wicked*—my mind recoils *, at the apprehenſion of their miſery. It has ſtudiouſly waved the fearful ſubject; and ſeems unwilling to purſue it, even now.—But 'tis better to reflect upon it, for a few minutes; than to endure it, to eternal ages. Perhaps, the conſideration of their aggravated miſery, may be *profitably terrible:* may teach me more highly to prize the Saviour, who "delivers from going down into the bottomleſs "pit:" may drive me like the avenger's ſword, to this only city of refuge, for obnoxious ſinners.

The wicked ſeem to lie here, like malefactors, in a deep and ſtrong dungeon; reſerved againſt the day of trial.—"*Their departure* was without peace." Clouds of horror, ſat louring upon their cloſing eye-lids; moſt ſadly foreboding the "blackneſs of darkneſs for ever." When the laſt ſickneſs ſeized their frame, and the inevitable change advanced; when they ſaw the fatal arrow, fitting to the ſtrings; ſaw the deadly archer, aiming at their heart; and felt the envenom'd ſhaft, faſtened in their vitals—Good God! what fearfulneſs came upon them! What horrible dread overwhelmed them! How did they ſtand ſhuddering and aghaſt, upon the tremendous precipice! exceſſively afraid to plunge into the abyſs of eternity, yet utterly unable to maintain their ſtanding on the verge of life.

O! what pale reviews, what ſtartling proſpects, conſpire to augment their ſorrows!—They look *backward*, and behold! a moſt melancholy ſcene! Sins unrepented of; mercy ſlighted; and the day of grace ending!—They look *forward*, and nothing preſents itſelf, but the righteous Judge; the dreadful tribunal; and a moſt ſolemn reckoning.—They roll *around* their affrighted eyes, on attending friends. If accomplices in debauchery; it ſharpens

* —*Animus meminiſſe horret, luctuque refugit.* VIRG.

ſharpens their anguiſh, to conſider this farther aggravation of their guilt; that they have not ſinned alone, but drawn others into the ſnare. If religious acquaintance; it ſtrikes a freſh gaſh into their hearts, to think of never ſeeing them any more, but only at an unapproachable diſtance, ſeparated by the unpaſſable gulf.

At laſt, perhaps, they begin to *pray*. Finding no other poſſible way of relief, they are conſtrained to apply unto the Almighty. With trembling lips, and a faltering tongue, they cry unto that ſovereign Being, "who kills and makes alive."—But why have they *deferred*, ſo long deferred their addreſſes to GOD? Why have they *deſpiſed* all his counſels; and ſtood incorrigible under his inceſſant reproofs? How often have they been forewarned of theſe terrors; and moſt importunately intreated, to *ſeek the LORD while he might be found?* —I wiſh, they may obtain mercy at the eleventh, at the laſt hour. I wiſh, they may be ſnatched from the jaws; the opened, the gaping, the almoſt cloſing jaws of damnation. But, alas! who can tell, whether affronted majeſty will lend an ear to their complaint? Whether the holy One will work a miracle of grace, in behalf of ſuch tranſgreſſors? He may, for ought any mortal knows, "laugh at their calamity, and mock when "their fear cometh."

Thus they lie, groaning out the poor remains of life; their limbs bathed in ſweat; their heart ſtruggling with convulſive throes; pains inſupportable throbbing in every pulſe; and innumerable darts of agony tranſfixing their conſcience.

In that dread moment, how the frantic ſoul
Raves round the walls of her clay tenement;
Runs to each avenue; and ſhrieks for help;
But ſhrieks in vain! How wiſhfully ſhe looks
On all ſhe's leaving, now no longer her's!
A little longer, yet a little longer,

O! might ſhe ſtay, to waſh away her crimes,
And fit her for her paſſage! Mournful ſight!
Her very eyes weep blood; and every groan
She heaves, is big with horror: but the foe,
Like a ſtaunch murd'rer, ſteady to his purpoſe,
Purſues her cloſe thro' ev'ry lane of life,
Nor miſſes once the track; but preſſes on;
Till, forc'd at laſt to the tremendous verge,
At once ſhe ſinks *.—

If *this* be the *end* of the ungodly, "my ſoul, come "not thou into their ſecret! Unto their aſſembly, mine "honour, be not thou united!"—How awfully accompliſhed is that prediction of inſpired Wiſdom! Sin, though ſeemingly ſweet in the commiſſion; yet *at the laſt, it biteth like a ſerpent, and ſtingeth like an adder.*—Fly, therefore, from the tents, O! fly from the ways, of ſuch wretched men.

Happy diſſolution! were this the period of their woes. But, alas! all theſe tribulations are only "the *beginning* "*of ſorrows*;" a ſmall drop only from that "cup of "trembling," which is mingled for their future portion. No ſooner has the laſt pang diſlodged their reluctant ſouls, but they are hurried into the preſence of an injured angry GOD. Not under the conducting care of beneficent angels, but expoſed to the inſults of accurſed ſpirits; who lately *tempted* them, now *upbraid* them, and will for ever *torment* them.—Who can imagine their confuſion and diſtreſs; when they ſtand, guilty and inexcuſable, before their incenſed Creator? They are received with frowns. The GOD that made them, has no "mercy on them †." The Prince of peace, rejects them with abhorrence. He conſigns them over to chains of *darkneſs*, and receptacles of *deſpair*; againſt the ſeverer doom, and more public infamy, of the great day.—

Then,

* See a valuable poem, intitled *The Grave.*

† Iſa. xxvii. 11.

Then, all the vials of wrath, will be emptied upon theſe wretched creatures. The law they have violated, and the goſpel they have ſlighted; the power they have defied, and the goodneſs they have abuſed; will all get themſelves honour in their exemplary deſtruction. Then, GOD, the GOD to whom vengeance belongeth, will draw the arrow to the very head, and ſet them as the mark of his inexorable diſpleaſure.

Reſurrection will be no privilege to them; but immortality itſelf, their everlaſting curſe.—Would they not bleſs the grave, "that land where all things are "forgotten;" and wiſh to lie, eternally hid, in it's deepeſt gloom? But, the duſt refuſes to *conceal* their perſons; or to draw a *veil* over their practices. They muſt alſo awake; muſt ariſe; muſt appear at the bar; and meet the Judge. A judge, before whom "the "pillars of heaven tremble, and the earth melts away." A judge, once long-ſuffering, and very compaſſionate; but now unalterably determined, to teach ſtubborn offenders—What it is, to *provoke* the omnipotent Godhead: what it is, to *trample* upon the blood of his Son: and offer *deſpite* to all the gracious overtures of his Spirit.

O! the perplexity! the diſtraction! that muſt ſeize the impenitent rebels, when they are ſummoned to the great tribunal!—What will they do, in this day of ſevere viſitation? This day of final deciſion?—Where? How? Whence can they find help?—To which of the ſaints will they turn? Whither, betake themſelves, for ſhelter or for ſuccour?—Alas! 'tis all in vain; 'tis all too late.—Friends and acquaintance know them no more. Men and angels abandon them to their approaching doom. Even the Mediator, the MEDIATOR himſelf, deſerts them in this dreadful hour.—To *fly*, will be impracticable; to *juſtify* themſelves, ſtill more impoſſible: and now, to make any *ſupplications*, utterly unavailable.

Behold! the books are opened. The ſecrets of all hearts are diſcloſed. The hidden things of darkneſs are brought to light. How empty, how ineffectual *now*, are all thoſe refined *artifices*; with which hypocrites impoſed upon their fellow-creatures, and preſerved a character in the ſight of men!—The jealous GOD, who has been about their path, and about their bed, and 'ſpied out all their ways, ſets before them the things that they have done. They cannot anſwer him one in a thouſand, nor ſtand in the awful judgment. *The heavens reveal their iniquities, and the earth riſes up againſt them**. They are *ſpeechleſs* with guilt, and *ſtigmatized* with infamy, before all the armies of the ſky, and all the nations of the redeemed.—What a favour would they eſteem it; to hide their aſhamed heads, in the bottom of the ocean; or even to be buried, beneath the ruins of the tottering world!

If the contempt, poured upon them, be thus inſupportable; how will their hearts endure, when the *ſword* of infinite indignation is unſheathed; and fiercely waved, around their defenceleſs heads; or pointed directly, at their naked breaſts? How muſt the wretches ſcream with wild amazement, and rend the very heavens with their cries, when the *right-aiming thunderbolts* go abroad! Go abroad, with a dreadful commiſſion, to drive them from the kingdoms of glory; and plunge them—not into the ſorrows of a moment, or the tortures of an hour—but into all the reſtleſs agonies of unquenchable fire, and everlaſting deſpair†.

Miſery of miſeries! too ſhocking for reflection, to dwell upon. But, if ſo diſmal to *foreſee*; and that at a diſtance; together with ſome comfortable expectation of

* Job xxi. 27.

† Regions of ſorrow, doleful ſhades, where peace
And reſt can never dwell; hope never comes,
That comes to all: but torture without end
Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
With ever-burning ſulphur unconſum'd. MILT.

of eſcaping it—O! how bitter, inconceivably bitter to *bear*; without any intermiſſion; or any mitigation; through hopeleſs and eternal ages!

Who has any bowels of pity?—Who has any ſentiments of compaſſion? Who has any tender concern for his fellow-creatures? Who?—In GOD's name, and for CHRIST's ſake, let him ſhew it; by warning every man, and beſeeching every man, to *ſeek* the LORD while he may be *found:* to throw down the arms of rebellion, before the act of indemnity expires: ſubmiſſively to adore the Lamb, while he holds out the golden ſceptre. Here, let us act the friendly part to mankind. Here, let the whole force of our *benevolence* exert itſelf: in exhorting relations, acquaintance, neighbours, whomſoever we may probably influence, to take the wings of *faith* unfeigned; of *repentance* undelayed; and flee away from the wrath to come.

Upon the whole; what ſtupendous diſcoveries are theſe! Lay them up in a faithful remembrance, O my ſoul. Recollect them, with the moſt ſerious attention; when thou lieſt down, and when thou riſeſt up. When thou walkeſt, receive them for thy *companions*; when thou talkeſt, liſten to them as thy *prompters*; and whatever thou doeſt, conſult them as thy *directors*.—Influenced by theſe conſiderations, thy views will greaten; thy affections be exalted; and thou thyſelf raiſed above the tantalizing power of periſhing things. Duly mindful of theſe, it will be the ſum of thy *deſires*, and the ſcope of thy *endeavours*, to gain the approbation of that ſovereign Being; who will then fill the throne, and pronounce the deciſive ſentence. Thou wilt ſee nothing worth a wiſh*, in compariſon of having his will for thy rule; his glory for thy aim; and his Holy Spirit for thy ever-actuating principle.

* Great day of dread, deciſion, and deſpair!
At thought of thee, each ſublunary wiſh
Lets go it's eager graſp, and quits the world.
Night Thoughts.

Wonder, O man; be loſt in admiration; at thoſe *prodigious events*, which are coming upon the univerſe, Events, the greatneſs of which, nothing finite can meaſure. Such, as will cauſe whatever is conſiderable or momentous in the annals of all generations, to ſink into littleneſs and nothing. Events (JESUS prepare us for their approach; defend us, when they take place!) big with the everlaſting fates, of all the living, and all the dead.—I muſt ſee the graves cleaving; the ſea teeming, and ſwarms unſuſpected, crouds unnumbered, yea, multitudes of *thronging nations*, riſing from both.—I muſt ſee the world in flames; muſt ſtand at the diſſolution of all terreſtrial things; and be an attendant on the *burial* of *nature*.—I muſt ſee the vaſt expanſe of the ſky, wrapt up like a ſcroll; and the incarnate GOD, iſſuing forth from light inacceſſible, with ten thouſand times ten thouſand angels, to judge both *men* and *devils*.—I muſt ſee the curtain of time drop; ſee all eternity diſcloſed to view; and enter upon a *ſtate* of being, that will never, never, have an end.

And ought I not (let the vaineſt imagination determine; ought I not) to try the ſincerity of my faith, and take heed to my ways? Is there an *inquiry*; is there a *care*; of greater, of equal, of comparable importance?—Is not this an infinitely preſſing call, to ſee that my loins are girded about; my lamp trimmed; and myſelf dreſſed for the bridegroom's appearance? That waſhed in the fountain opened in my Saviour's ſide, and clad with the marriage garment wove by his obedience; I may be found in peace, unblameable, and unreproveable.—Otherwiſe, how ſhall I ſtand with boldneſs; when the ſtars of heaven fall from their orbs? How ſhall I come forth *erect* and *courageous*; when the *earth* itſelf *reels* to and fro like a drunkard*? How ſhall I look up with joy, and ſee my ſalvation drawing nigh; when the hearts of millions and millions fail for fear?

Now

* Iſa. xxiv. 20.

Now, madam, leſt my meditations ſet in a cloud; and leave any unpleaſing gloom upon your mind;, let me once more turn to the *brightening proſpects* of the righteous. A view of them, and their delightful expectations, may ſerve to exhilarate the thoughts; which have been muſing upon melancholy ſubjects, and hovering about the edges of infernal darkneſs. Juſt as a ſpacious field, arrayed in *chearful green*, relieves and reinvigorates the eye; which has fatigued itſelf by poring upon ſome minute, or gazing upon ſome glaring object.

The righteous ſeem to lie by, in the boſom of the earth, as a *wary pilot* in ſome well-ſheltered creek; till all the ſtorms, which infeſt this lower world, are blown over. Here they enjoy ſafe anchorage; are in no danger of *foundering*, amidſt the waves of prevailing iniquity; or of being *ſhipwrecked*, on the rocks of any powerful temptation. But, ere-long, we ſhall behold them hoiſting their flag of hope; riding before a ſweet gale of atoning merit, and redeeming love; till they make, with all the ſails of an aſſured faith, the bleſſed port of eternal life.

Then, may the honoured friend, to whom I am writing; rich in good works; rich in heavenly tempers; but inexpreſſibly richer in her Saviour's righteouſneſs—O! may ſhe enter the harbour, like a gallant *ſtately veſſel*; returned ſucceſsful and victorious from ſome grand expedition; with acclamations, honour, and joy! While my *little bark*, attendant on the ſolemnity, and a partaker of the triumph, glides humbly after: and both reſt together in the haven—the wiſh'd for, bliſsful haven, of perfect ſecurity, and everlaſting repoſe

REFLEC-

REFLECTIONS

ON

A FLOWER GARDEN.

IN A LETTER TO A LADY.

MADAM,

SOME time ago, my meditations took a turn among the *tombs*. They viſited the awful and melancholy manſions of the dead *; and you was pleaſed to favour them with your attention.—May I, now, beg the honour of your company, in a more inviting and delightful excurſion? In a beautiful *flower-garden*; where I lately walked, and at once regaled the ſenſe, and indulged the fancy.

It was early in a *ſummer morning*. When the air was cool; the earth moiſt; the whole face of the creation freſh

* "Diſcourſes on the *vanity* of the creature, which repreſent the "barrenneſs of every thing in this world, and it's incapacity of pro- "ducing any ſolid or ſubſtantial happineſs, are uſeful.—Thoſe "ſpeculations alſo, which ſhew the *bright ſide* of things, and lay "forth thoſe innocent entertainments, which are to be met with "among the ſeveral objects that encompaſs us, are no leſs benefi- "cial." *Spect.* Vol. V. No. 393. *Upon the plan of theſe obſervations, the preceding and following reflections are formed.*

freſh and gay. The noiſy world was ſcarce awake. *Si-neſs* had not quite ſhook off his ſound ſleep; and ri had but juſt reclined his giddy head. All was ſerene; all was ſtill: every thing tended to inſpire tranquillity of mind, and invite to ſerious thought.

Only the wakeful *lark* had left her neſt, and wa mounting on high to ſalute the opening day. Elevated in air, ſhe ſeemed to call the laborious huſbandman to his toil, and all her fellow-ſongſters to their notes.— Earlieſt of birds, ſaid I, companion of the dawn, may I always riſe at thy voice! riſe, to offer the mattin-ſong; and adore that beneficent Being, "who maketh the "out-goings of the morning and evening to rejoice."

How charming to rove abroad, at this ſweet *hour of prime!* To enjoy the calm of nature; to tread the dewy lawns; and taſte the unrifled freſhneſs of the air!

Sweet is the breath of morn, her riſing ſweet,
With charm of earlieſt birds.

What a pleaſure do the ſons of *ſloth* loſe? Little, ah! little is the ſluggard ſenſible, how delicious an entertainment he foregoes, for the pooreſt of all animal gratifications *.

The greyneſs of the dawn decays gradually. Abundance of ruddy ſtreaks tinge the fleeces of the firmament.

* See! how revelation and reaſon, the ſcriptures and the claſſics unanimouſly exhort to this moſt beneficial practice. They both invite us to *early riſing*, by the moſt engaging motives, and the moſt alluring repreſentations.

Come, my beloved, let us go forth into the field; let us lodge in the villages. Let us get up early to the vineyards; let us ſee if the vine flouriſh, whether the tender grape appear, and the pomegranates bud forth. Cant. vii. 11, 12.

Luciferi primo cum ſidere, frigida rura
Carpamus: dum mane novum, dum gramina canent,
Et ros in tenera pecori gratiſſimus herba eſt. VIRG. *Georg.* III.

nent. Till at length, the *dappled* aſpect of the eaſt is oſt, in one ardent and boundleſs *bluſh*.—Is it the ſur-niſe of imagination, or do the ſkies really redden with name; to ſee ſo many ſupinely ſtretched, on their rowſy pillows?—Shall man be loſt in luxurious eaſe? hall man waſte theſe precious hours in idle ſlumbers? While the vigorous ſun is up, and going on his Maker's rrand? While all the feather'd choir are hymning the reator, and paying their homage in harmony?—No. et *him* heighten the melody of the tuneful tribes, by dding the rational ſtrains of devotion. Let *him* im-rove the fragrant oblations of nature, by mingling ith the riſing odours, the more refined breath of praiſe.

'Tis natural for man to look upward; to throw his rſt glance upon the objects that are above him.

Strait towards heav'n my wond'ring eyes I turn'd,
And gaz'd a-while the ample SKY.

Prodigious theatre! Where lightnings dart their fire, nd thunders utter their voice. Where tempeſts ſpend heir rage, and worlds unnumbered roll at large!—O he *greatneſs* of that mighty hand; which meteth out his amazing circumference with a ſpan! O the *immen-ity* of that wonderful Being; before whom this unmea-urable extent, is no more than a point!—And O (thou leaſing thought!) the unſearchable *riches* of that *mer-y*, which is *greater than the heavens* * *!* Is more enlarged nd extenſive, in it's gracious exerciſe; than theſe illi-itable tracts of air, and ſea, and firmament! Which ardons crimes of the moſt enormous ſize, and the moſt orrid aggravations; pardons them in conſideration of he Redeemer's atonement, with perfect freeneſs, and he utmoſt readineſs! More readily, if it were poſſible, han this *all-ſurrounding expanſe* admits, within it's cir-uit, a ridge of mountains, or even a grain of ſand.

Come

* Pſal. cviii. 4.

Come hither then, ye *awakened*, trembling ſinners. Come*, weary and heavy-laden with a ſenſe of your iniquities. Condemn yourſelves. Renounce all reliance on any thing of your own. Let your *truſt be in the tender mercy of* GOD, *for ever and ever.*

In them hath he ſet a tabernacle for the ſun†.—Behold him coming forth from the chambers of the eaſt. See! the clouds, like floating curtains, are thrown back at his approach. With what *refulgent majeſty* does he walk abroad! How tranſcendently bright is his countenance; ſhedding day, and inexhauſtible light, through the univerſe!—Is there a ſcene, though finiſhed by the moſt elaborate and coſtly refinements of art, "compa-"rable to theſe illuſtrious ſolemnities of opening ſun-"ſhine? Before *theſe*, all the ſtudied pageantry of the "theatre; the glittering œconomy of an aſſembly; or "even the heightened ornaments of a royal palace; "hide their diminiſhed heads, and ſhrink into no-"thing."—I have read of a perſon, ſo ſtruck with the ſplendors of this noble luminary; that he imagined himſelf made on purpoſe to contemplate it's glories. O! that chri-

* The lines which follow, are admirably deſcriptive of the ſpirit and practice, hinted above. In them deſire *pants*; prayer *wreſtles*; and faith, as it were, *graſps* the prize.—I take leave to tranſplant them into this place; and I could wiſh them a better, a more conſpicuous ſituation, than either their *new* or their *native* ſoil. Their native ſoil, is no other than *The lamentation of a ſinner*, written by Mr. *Sternhold*. Notwithſtanding the unpromiſing genius of the performance, I think, we may challenge the greateſt maſters, to produce any thing more ſpirited and importunate; more full of nature, or more flu̇ſhed with life.

Mercy, good LORD, mercy I crave;
This is the total ſum;
For mercy, LORD, is all my ſuit;
LORD, let thy mercy come.

The ſhort ſentences—Not a ſingle copulative—The frequent repetition of the Divine name—The almoſt inceſſant reiteration of the bleſſing, ſo paſſionately deſired, and inexpreſſibly needed.—This is the genuine language of ardor; theſe are beauties obvious to every eye; and cannot fail, either to pleaſe the *judicious* taſte, or to edify the *gracious* heart.

† Pſal. xix. 4.

chriſtians would adopt his perſuaſion, and transfer it to the *Sun of righteouſneſs!* Thus applied, it would ceaſe to be a chimerical notion, and become a moſt important truth. For ſure I am, it is the ſupreme happineſs of the eternal ſtate; and therefore may well be the ruling concern of this preſent life; *to know the only true GOD, and JESUS CHRIST, whom he hath ſent.*—Nor do I ſtand alone in this opinion. The very beſt judge of whatever is valuable in ſcience, or perfective of our nature; a judge, who formed his taſte on the maxims of paradiſe, and received the finiſhings of his education in the third heavens; this judge, determines to *know nothing but JESUS CHRIST, and him crucified.* He poſſeſſed, in his own perſon, the fineſt, the moſt admired *accompliſhments*; yet pronounces them no better than *dung*, in compariſon of the * ſuper-eminent excellency of this ſaving knowledge.

Methinks, I diſcern a thouſand admirable properties in the ſun. 'Tis certainly, the beſt material emblem of the Creator. There is more of GOD in it's *luſtre*, *energy*, and *uſefulneſs*, than in any other viſible being. To worſhip it as a deity, was the leaſt inexcuſable of all the heathen idolatries. One ſcarce can wonder, that fallen reaſon ſhould miſtake ſo fair a *copy*, for the adorable *original*. No compariſon, in the whole book of ſacred wiſdom, pleaſes me more; than that which reſembles the bleſſed JESUS, to yonder regent of the day †; who now advances on his azure road, to ſcatter light, and diſpenſe gladneſs through the nations.

What were all the realms of the world, but a *dungeon* of *darkneſs*, without the beams of the ſun? All their fine ſcenes, hid from our view; loſt in obſcurity.—In vain, we roll around our eyes, in the midnight gloom. In vain, we ſtrive to behold the features of amiable na-

* Το υπερεχον της γνωσεως. Phil. iii. 7.

† *Unto you, that fear my name, ſhall the Sun of Righteouſneſs ariſe, with healing in his wings.* Mal. iv. 2.

ture. Turn whither we will, no form or comeliness appears. All seems a dreary waste; an undistinguished chaos. Till the returning hours, have unbarred the gates of light, and let forth the morn.—Then, what a prospect opens! the heavens are paved with azure, and strewed with roses. A variety of the liveliest verdures array the plains. The flowers put on a glow of the richest colours. The whole creation stands forth, dressed in all the charms of beauty. The ravished eye looks round, and wonders.

And what had been the condition of our intellectual nature, without the great Redeemer, and his *divine revelation?*—Alas! what absurd and unworthy apprehensions, did the *Pagan* sages form of GOD! What idle dreams, what childish conjectures, were their doctrines of a future state!—How did the bulk, even of that favoured nation, the *Jews*, weary themselves in very vanity, to obtain peace and reconciliation with their offended JEHOVAH! Till JESUS arose upon our benighted minds, and brought life and immortality to light; till HE arose, *to enlighten the wretched Gentiles, and to be the glory of his people Israel.*

Now we no longer cry out, with a restless impatience, *where is GOD my Maker?* For we are allowed to contemplate the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, *in the face of JESUS CHRIST.*—Now, we no longer inquire, with an unsatisfied solicitude, "which is the way to bliss? Because JESUS has marked the *path*, by his shining example; and left us an unerring *clue*, in his holy word.—Now, we have no more reason to proceed with misgiving hearts, in our journey to eternity; or to ask anxiously, as we go; "who "will roll away the stone, and open the everlasting "doors? Who will remove the flaming sword, and give "us admission into the delights of paradise?" For it is done, all done, by the Captain of our salvation. Sin he

has

has *expiated*, by the unblemiſhed ſacrifice of himſelf. The law he has *fulfilled*, by his perfect obedience. The ſinner he *transforms*, by his ſanctifying SPIRIT.—In a word; he hath both preſented us with a *clear diſcovery* of good things to come; and adminiſtered to us an *abundant entrance* into the final enjoyment of them.

Whenever, therefore, we bleſs GOD for the circling ſeaſons, and revolving day; let us adore, thankfully adore him, for the *more precious* appearance of the Sun of righteouſneſs, and his glorious goſpel. Without which, we ſhould have been groping, even to this hour, in ſpiritual darkneſs, and the ſhadow of death. Without which, we muſt have wandered in a maze of inextricable uncertainties; and have "ſtumbled upon the dark "mountains" of error, till we fell into the bottomleſs pit of perdition.

Without that grand *enlivening* principle, what were this earth, but a lifeleſs maſs? A rude lump of *inactive* matter? The trees could never break forth into leaves, nor the plants ſpring up into flowers. We ſhould no more behold the meadows mantled over with green; nor the valleys, ſtanding thick with corn. Or, to ſpeak in the beautiful language of a prophet; * *No longer would the fig-tree bloſſom, nor fruit be in the vine: the labour of the olive would fail, and the fields could yield no meat: the flocks muſt be cut off from the fold, and there would be no herd in the ſtalls.*—The ſun darts it's beams among all the vegetable tribes; and paints the ſpring, and enriches the autumn. This pierces to the roots of the vineyard and the orchard; and ſets afloat thoſe fermenting juices, which at length burſt into floods of wine, or bend the boughs with a mellow load.—Nor are it's favours confined to the *upper regions*; but diſtributed unto the *deepeſt receſſes* of creation. It penetrates the beds of metal, and finds it's way to the place of the ſapphires. It tinctures the ſeeds of gold, that are ripening into ore;

* Hab. iii. 17.

and throws a brilliancy into the water of the diamond, that is hardening on it's rock.—In ſhort; the beneficial agency of this magnificent luminary, is inexpreſſible. It *beautifies* and *impregnates*, univerſal nature. "There "is nothing hid from the heat thereof."

Juſt in the ſame manner, were the rational world *dead in treſpaſſes and ſins*, without the reviving energy of JESUS CHRIST. He is "the reſurrection and the life:" the overflowing fountain of the one, and the all-powerful cauſe of the other. The ſecond *Adam* is a *quickening ſpirit*, and all his ſaints live through him. He ſhines upon their affections; and they ſhoot forth into heavenly graces, and abound in the fruits of righteouſneſs. Faith unfeigned, and love undiſſembled, thoſe nobleſt productions of the renewed nature, are the effects of *his* operation on the mind. Not ſo much as one divine diſpoſition could ſpread itſelf, not one chriſtian habit unfold and flouriſh, without the kindly influence of *his* grace.

As there is no fruitfulneſs, ſo likewiſe no *chearfulneſs* *, without the ſun.—When that auſpicious ſovereign of the day, diffuſes the mildneſs of his morning ſplendor, he creates an univerſal feſtival. Millions of glittering inſects awake into exiſtence, and baſk in his rays. The birds ſtart from their ſlumbers, and pour their delighted ſouls, in harmony. The flocks, with bleating accents, hail the welcome bleſſing. The valleys ring with rural muſic; the hills echo back the artleſs ſtrains. All that is vocal, joins in the general choir: all that has breath, exults in the chearing influence.—Whereas; was that radiant orb extinguiſhed, a tremendous gloom would enſue, and horror inſupportable. Nay; let it only be *eclipſed*, for a few minutes; and all nature aſſumes an air of *ſadneſs*. The heavens are wrapt in ſables, and put

* "The ſun, which is as the great ſoul of the univerſe, and "produces all the neceſſaries of life, has a particular influence in "*chearing* the mind of man, and making the heart *glad*." *Spect.* Vol. V. No. 387.

put on a kind of mourning. The moſt ſprightly animals hang down their dejected heads. The ſongſters of the grove are ſtruck dumb. Howling beaſts roam abroad for prey: ominous birds come forth and ſcreech: the heart of man fails, or a ſudden pang ſeizes the forebodeing mind.—So, when CHRIST hides away his face; when faith loſes ſight of that conſolation of *Iſrael*; how *gloomy* are the proſpects of the ſoul! Our GOD ſeems to be a conſuming fire, and our ſins cry loudly for vengeance. The thoughts bleed inwardly; the chriſtian walks heavily. All without is irkſome; all within is diſconſolate.—Lift up then, moſt gracious JESUS, thou *nobler day-ſpring* from on high! O lift up the light of thy countenance, upon thy people! Reveal the fulneſs of thy mediatorial ſufficiency; make clear our title to this great ſalvation; and thereby impart

What nothing earthly gives, or can deſtroy,
The ſoul's calm ſun-ſhine, and the heart-felt joy.*

In one inſtance more, let me purſue the ſimilitude. The ſun, I obſerve, pours his luſtre all *around*; to every *diſtance*, and in every *direction*. Profuſely liberal of his gifts, he illuminates and chears all the ends of the earth, and the whole compaſs of the ſkies. The eaſt reddens with his riſing radiance; and the weſtern hills, are gilded with his ſtreaming ſplendors. The chilly regions of the north, are cheriſhed by his genial warmth; while the ſouthern tracts, glow with his fire.—Thus, are the influences of the Sun of Righteouſneſs, *diffuſive* and *unconfined*. The generations of old felt them; and generations yet unborn, will rejoice in them. The merits of his precious death extended to the firſt, and will be propagated to the laſt, ages of mankind.—May they, ere long, viſit the remoteſt climates, and darkeſt corners of the earth! Command thy goſpel, bleſſed JESUS, thy everlaſting goſpel, to take the wings of the morning,

* POPE's *Eth. Ep.*

and travel with yonder ſun. Let it fly upon ſtrong pinions among every people, nation, and language. That, where the heat ſcorches, and the cold freezes, thou mayſt be known, confeſſed, and adored! That *ſtrangers* to thy name, and *enemies* to thy doctrine, may be enlightened with the knowledge, and won to the love, of thy truth! O! may that beſt of æras come; that wiſhed-for period advance; when *All the ends of the world ſhall remember themſelves, and be turned unto the* LORD; *and all the kindreds of the nations worſhip before him* *!

From the heavens, we retire to the earth.—Here, the drops of *dew*, like ſo many liquid cryſtals †, ſparkle upon the eye. How *brilliant*, and unſullied, is their luſtre! How little inferior to the proud ſtone, which irradiates a monarch's crown! They want nothing but ſolidity and permanency; to equal them with the fineſt treaſures of the jeweller's caſket.—Here, it muſt be confeſſed, they are greatly deficient; ſhort-lived ornaments; poſſeſſed of little more, than a *momentary radiance*. The ſun, that lights them up, will ſoon melt them into air, or exhale them into vapours. Within an hour, we may "look for their place, and they ſhall be away."—O! may every good reſolution of mine, and of my flock's; may our united breathings after GOD, not be like theſe *tranſient decorations* of the morning; but like the ſubſtantial glory of the growing day! The one ſhines more and more, with augmented ſplendors; while the other, having glittered gaily for a few moments, diſappear and are loſt.

How ſenſibly has this dew *refreſhed* the vegetable kingdoms! The fervent heat of yeſterday's ſun, had almoſt parched the face, and exhauſted the ſweets, of nature. But what a ſovereign reſtorative, are theſe *cooling diſtillations* of the night! How they gladden and invigorate

* Pfalm xxii. 27.

† Now morn, her roſy ſteps in th' eaſtern clime
Advancing, ſow'd the earth with *orient pearl*. MILT.

gorate the languiſhing herbs! Sprinkled with theſe reviving drops, their verdure deepens; their bloom is new-fluſhed; their fragrance, faint or intermitted, becomes potent and copious.—Thus does the ever-bleſſed SPIRIT *revive* the drooping troubled conſcience of a ſinner. When that Almighty Comforter ſheds his ſweet influence on the ſoul; diſplays the all-ſufficient ſacrifice of a divine Redeemer; and "witneſſes with our ſpirit," that we are *intereſted* in the Saviour, and, by this means, are *children of GOD*; then, what a pleaſing change enſues! Former anxieties are remembered no more. Every uneaſy apprehenſion vaniſhes. Soothing hopes, and delightful expectations, ſucceed. The countenance drops it's dejected mien; the eyes brighten with a lively chearfulneſs; while the lips expreſs the heart-felt ſatisfaction, in the language of thankſgiving, and the voice of melody.—In this ſenſe, merciful GOD, *be as the dew unto Iſrael!* "Pour upon them the continual dew of thy "bleſſing." And O! let not my fleece be dry, while heavenly benediction deſcends upon all around.

Who can number theſe pearly drops? They hang on every hedge; they twinkle from every ſpray; and adorn the whole herbage of the field. Not a blade of graſs, not a ſingle leaf, but wears the watry pendants. So *vaſt* is the *profuſion*, that it baffles the arithmetician's art.—Here, let the benevolent mind contemplate and admire that emphatical ſcripture; which, from this elegant ſimilitude, deſcribes the *increaſe* of the *Meſſiah*'s kingdom. The royal prophet, ſpeaking of CHRIST, and foretelling the ſucceſs of his religion, has this remarkable expreſſion *; *The dew of thy birth is of the womb of the morning*. (i. e.) As the morning is the mother of dews; produces

* *Pſ.* cx. 3. *Merehem meſheter lech ihel iledetech.* The moſt exact tranſlation of this difficult paſſage is, I apprehend, as follows; *Præ rore uteri auroræ, tibi eſt ros juventutis vel prolis tuæ.* The dew of thy birth is larger, more copious, than the dew which proceeds from the womb of the morning.—I cannot acquieſce in the new verſion; becauſe

produces them, as it were, from a prolific womb; and ſcatters them, with the moſt laviſh abundance, over all the ſurface of the earth: *So ſhall thy ſeed be,* O thou ever-

cauſe that disjoins *the womb of the morning*, from *the dew of thy birth*. Whereas, they ſeem to have a clear affinity, and a cloſe connection. The womb of the morning is, with the utmoſt pertinency, applied to the conception and production of dews; agreeably to a delicate line, in that great maſter of juſt deſcription, and lively painting, Mr. *Thomſon*:

The meek-ey'd morn appears, mother of dews. Summer.

We meet with a fine expreſſion in the book of *Job*, which may ſerve to confirm this remark; may illuſtrate the propriety of the phraſe, uſed in this connection. "Hath the rain a father, or who "hath *begotten the drops of dew?*" It ſeems, the Oriental writers delighted to repreſent the dew, as a kind of birth, as the offſpring of the morning. And if ſo, ſurely there could be no image in the whole compaſs of the univerſe, better adapted to the Pſalmiſt's purpoſe: or more ſtrongly ſignificant of thoſe multitudes of proſelytes, which were *born, not of blood, nor of the will of the fleſh, nor of the will of man, but of GOD*; by the powerful energy of his word and Spirit.—Upon this ſuppoſition, the whole verſe deſcribes

The willing ſubjection,
The gracious accompliſhments,
And the vaſt number,
} of Chriſt's converts.

q. d. *In the day of thy power*, when thy glorious Goſpel ſhall be publiſhed in the world, and accompanied with marvellous efficacy—In that memorable period, *Thy people*, diſcontinuing the former oblations, commanded under the *Moſaic* law; ſhall devote *themſelves*, as ſo many living ſacrifices, to thy honour. Not conſtrained by force, but charmed with thy excellency, they ſhall come in *volunteers* to thy ſervice, and be *free-will offerings* in thy church.—Neither ſhall they be "empty vines," or bare profeſſors; but ſhall walk in all the *beauties of holineſs*, and bring forth ſuch amiable fruit, as will adorn the doctrine they embrace.—What is ſtill more deſirable, they ſhall be as *numerous*, as they are willing and holy. Born to thee in numbers, immenſe and inconceivable; exceeding even the countleſs myriads of dew-drops, which are begotten by the night, and iſſue from the womb of the recent morning.

By this interpretation, the text, I think, is cleared of it's obſcurity; and appears both truly ſublime, and perfectly juſt.

May I be pardoned the *digreſſion*, and acquitted from *preſumption*; if, on this occaſion, I take leave to animadvert upon, what ſeems harſh and unnatural, in the common expoſition of the laſt verſe of this pſalm? All the commentators (as many, at leaſt, as I have conſulted) inform their readers; That to *drink of the brook in the way*, ſignifies *to undergo ſufferings and death*. Which, in my opinion, is a con-

everlaſting Father! By the preaching of thy word, ſhall ſuch an innumerable race of regenerate children be born unto thee; and prove an ornament and a bleſſing to all ages.

a conſtruction extremely forced, and hardly ſupportable; altogether remote from the import of ſuch poetical forms of diction, cuſtomary among the Eaſtern nations. In thoſe ſultry climes, nothing could be more welcome to the traveller, than a brook ſtreaming near his paths. To quench his thirſt, and lave his feet, in the cooling current, was one of the greateſt refreſhments imaginable, and re-animated him to purſue his journey. For which reaſon, among others, brooks are a very favourite image with the inſpired penmen; uſed to denote a ſituation *fertile* and *delightful*, or a ſtate of *pleaſure* and *ſatisfaction*; but never, that I can recollect, to picture out the contrary condition of tribulation and diſtreſs.

The *water floods*, indeed, in the ſacred writings, often repreſent ſome imminent danger, or grievous affliction. But then they are not—*Nehelim bedrech*—ſtreams ſo *calm*, that they keep within their banks, and glide quietly by the traveller's footſteps; ſo *clear*, that they are fit for the wayfaring man's uſe, and invite his lips to a draught; both which notions are plainly implied in the text.—They are rather—*Meſhebri*—*boiſterous billows*; burſting over a ſhip, or daſhing themſelves, with dreadful impetuoſity, upon the ſhore: Or—*Shebelet*—*ſweeping inundations*; which bear down all before them, and drown the neighbouring country.—Beſides, in theſe inſtances of horror, we never find the word—*Iſhete*—*He ſhall drink*; which conveys a pleaſing idea (unleſs when it relates to a cup, filled with bitter, intoxicating, or impoiſoned liquors; a caſe quite different from that under conſideration) but either—*Bot*—which imports *terror* and *aſtoniſhment*, or elſe—*Shethep* and *jeber*—which ſignify to *ruſh upon*; to *overwhelm*; and even to *bury* under the waves.

Upon the whole: May not the paſſage more properly allude to the *influences* of the *Holy Ghoſt*? which were communicated, in unmeaſurable degrees, to our great High-Prieſt; and were, in fact, the cauſe of his ſurmounting all difficulties.—Theſe are frequently repreſented by *waters*; "Whoſo believeth on Me, out of his belly ſhall "flow rivers of *living waters*."—The enjoyment of them is deſcribed by *drinking*; "He that *drinketh* of the water that I ſhall give him, "ſhall never thirſt."—Then, the ſenſe may run in this well connected and perſpicuous manner. Is it aſked? How ſhall the Redeemer be able to execute the various and important offices foretold in the preceding parts of the pſalm? The prophet replies, *He ſhall drink of the brook in the way.* He ſhall not be left barely to his human nature, which muſt unavoidably ſink under the tremendous work of recovering a loſt world. But, through the whole courſe of his incarnate ſtate, through the whole adminiſtration of his mediatorial kingdom, ſhall be ſupported with omnipotent ſuccours. He ſhall drink of the brook of Almighty Power, and travel on in the greatneſs of an uncreated

ages. Millions, millions of willing converts, from every nation under heaven, ſhall croud into thy family, and repleniſh thy church. Till they become like the ſtars of the ſky, or the ſands of the ſea for multitude; or even as *numberleſs* as theſe fine *ſpangles*, which now cover the face of nature.—Behold then, ye obſtinately wicked, though you "are not gathered, yet will the Saviour be glorious." His deſign ſhall not miſcarry, nor his labour prove abortive, though you render it of none effect, with regard to yourſelves. Think not, that IMMANUEL will want believers, or heaven inhabitants, becauſe *you* continue incorrigible. No; the Lamb that was ſlain, will "ſee of the travail of his ſoul, and be ſatisfied;" in a never-failing ſeries of faithful people below, and an immenſe choir of glorified ſaints above. Who ſhall form his retinue, and ſurround his throne, in ſhining and triumphant armies, ſuch as no man can number.

Here, I was reminded of the various expedients which providence unſearchably wiſe, uſes, to *fructify* both the material and intellectual world.—Sometimes, you ſhall have *impetuous* and heavy *ſhowers*, burſting from the angry clouds. They laſh the plains, and make the rivers foam. A ſtorm brings them, and a deluge follows them. —At other times, theſe *gentle dews* are formed, in the ſerene evening air. They ſteal down by ſlow degrees, and with inſenſible ſtilneſs. So ſubtle, that they deceive the niceſt eye: ſo ſilent, that they eſcape the moſt delicate ear: and when fallen, ſo very light, that they neither bruiſe the tendereſt, nor oppreſs the weakeſt flower.—Very *different* operations! Yet each concurs in the *ſame* beneficial end, and both impart fertility to the lap of nature.

So,

uncreated ſtrength.—*Therefore ſhall he lift up his head.* By this means ſhall he be equal to the prodigious taſk, and ſuperior to all oppoſition. By this means, ſhall he be thoroughly ſucceſsful, in whatever he undertakes; and greatly triumphant, over all his enemies.

So, ſome perſons have I known, reclaimed from the unfruitful works of darkneſs, by *violent* and ſevere means. The Almighty addreſſed their ſtubborn hearts, as he addreſſed the *Iſraelites* at *Sinai*, with lightning in his eyes, and thunder in his voice. The conſcience, ſmit with a ſenſe of guilt, and apprehenſive of eternal vengeance, trembled through all her powers; juſt as that ſtrong mountain tottered to it's centre. Pangs of remorſe, and agonies of fear, preceded their new birth. They were reduced to the laſt extremities, almoſt overwhelmed with deſpair, before they found reſt in JESUS CHRIST.—Others have been recovered from a vain converſation, by methods more *mild* and attractive. The Father of ſpirits applied himſelf to their teachable minds, in "a "ſtill and ſmall voice." His grace came down, as the rain into a fleece of wool; or as theſe ſoftening drops, which now water the earth. The kingdom of GOD took place in their ſouls, without noiſe or obſervation. They paſſed from death unto life, from a carnal to a regenerate ſtate, by almoſt imperceptible advances. The tranſition reſembled the growth of corn: was very viſible, when effected; though ſcarce ſenſible, while accompliſhing.—O thou author and finiſher of our faith, recal us from our wanderings, and re-unite us to thyſelf! Whether thou *alarm* us with thy terrors, or *allure* us with thy ſmiles: whether thou drive us with the ſcourge of conviction, or draw us with the cords of love: let us, in any-wiſe, return to thee. For thou art our ſupreme good; thou art our only happineſs.

Before I proceed farther, let me aſcend the *terrace*, and take one ſurvey of the neighbouring *country*.—What a proſpect ruſhes upon my ſight! How vaſt; how various; how "full and plenteous with all manner of "ſtore!" Nature's whole wealth!—What a rich and inexhauſtible magazine is here: furniſhing ſubſiſtence for every creature! Methinks, I read, in theſe ſpacious volumes, a moſt lively comment, upon that noble celebration

tion of the divine beneficence; *He openeth his hand, and filleth all things living with plenteouſneſs.*

Theſe are thy glorious works, Parent of Good,
Almighty! Thine this univerſal frame,
Thus wond'rous fair! Thyſelf how wond'rous then!
MILT.

The *fields* are covered deep, and ſtand thick, with corn. They expand the milky *grain* to the ſun; while the gales, now inclining, now raiſing each flexile ſtem, open all their ranks to the agency of his beams. Which will ſoon impart a firm conſiſtence to the grain, and a gloſſy golden hue to the ear. That they may be qualified, to fill the barns of the huſbandman with plenty, and his heart with gladneſs.

Yonder lie the *meadows*, ſmoothed into a perfect level; decorated with an embroidery of the gayeſt flowers; and loaded with * ſpontaneous crops of *herbage*. Which, converted into hay, will prove a moſt commodious proviſion for the barrenneſs of winter; will ſupply with fodder our ſerviceable animals, when all the verdure of the plain is killed by froſts, or buried in ſnows.—A winding *ſtream*, glides along the flowery margin; and receives the image of the bending ſkies, and waters the roots of many a branching willow. 'Tis ſtocked, no doubt, with variety of *fiſh*; which afford a ſolitary diverſion to the angler, and nouriſh for his table a delicious treat. Nor is it the only merit of this liquid element, to maintain the finny nations; it alſo carries *cleanlineſs*, and diſpenſes *fruitfulneſs*, where-ever it rolls the cryſtal current.

The *paſtures*, with their verdant mounds, chequer the proſpect; and prepare a ſtanding repaſt for our cattle. There, "our oxen are made ſtrong to labour; and our "ſheep bring forth thouſands and ten thouſands."

There

* —— *Injuſſa virescunt*
Gramina—— VIRG.

There, the horſe acquires vigour, for the diſpatch of our buſineſs; and ſpeed, to expedite our journeys. From thence, the kine bring home their udders, diſtended with one of the richeſt and healthieſt liquors in the world.

On ſeveral ſpots, a *grove* of trees, like ſome grand colonnade, erects it's tow'ring head. Every one projects a friendly ſhade, for the beaſts; and creates an hoſpitable lodging, for the birds. Every one ſtands ready, to furniſh *timber* for a palace; *maſts* for a navy; or, with a more condeſcending courteſy, *fuel* for our hearths.—One of them ſeems ſkirted with a wild uncultivated *heath*; which, like well diſpoſed ſhades in painting, throws an additional luſtre on the more ornamented parts of the landſcape. Nor is it's uſefulneſs, like that of a foil, relative only, but real. There, ſeveral valuable creatures are produced, and accommodated; without any expence, or care of ours. There, likewiſe, ſpring abundance of thoſe *herbs*, which aſſwage the ſmart of our wounds, and allay the fiery tumults of the fever. Which impart floridity to our circulating fluids; add a more vigorous tone to our active ſolids; and, thereby, repair the decays of our enfeebled conſtitutions.

Nearer the houſes, we perceive an ample ſpread of branches; not ſo ſtately as the oaks, but more amiable for their annual ſervices. A little while ago, I beheld them; and all was one beauteous, boundleſs waſte of *bloſſoms*. The eye marvelled, at the lovely ſight; and the heart rejoiced, in the proſpect of autumnal plenty. But now, the blooming maid is reſigned, for the uſeful matron. The flower is fallen, and the *fruit* ſwells out on every twig.—Breathe ſoft, ye winds! O, ſpare the tender fruitage, ye ſurly blaſts! Let the *pear-tree* ſuckle her juicy progeny; till they drop into our hands, and diſſolve in our mouths. Let the *plumb* hang unmoleſted upon her boughs; till ſhe fatten her delicious fleſh, and cloud her poliſhed ſkin with blue. And as for the *apples*, that ſtaple commodity of our *orchards*, let no injurios

rious ſhocks precipitate them immaturely to the ground; till revolving ſuns, have tinged them with a ruddy complexion, and concocted them into an exquiſite flavour. Then, what copious hoards, of what burniſhed rinds, and what delightful reliſhes, will repleniſh the ſtore-room! Some, to preſent us with an early entertainment, and refreſh our palates amidſt the ſultry heats. Some, to borrow ripeneſs from the falling ſnows, and carry autumn into the depths of winter. Some, to adorn the ſalver, make a part of the deſſert, and give an agreeable * cloſe to our feaſts. Others, to fill our vats with a foaming flood; which, mellowed by age, may ſparkle in the glaſs, with a livelineſs and delicacy, little inferior to the blood of the grape.

I obſerve ſeveral ſmall *incloſures*, which ſeem to be apprehenſive of ſome hoſtile viſit from the north; and, therefore, are defended, on that quarter, by a thick wood, or a lofty wall. At the ſame time, they cultivate an uninterrupted correſpondence with the ſouth; and throw open their whole dimenſions, to it's friendly warmth. One, in particular, lies within the reach of a diſtinguiſhing view; and proves to be a *kitchen-garden*. It looks, methinks, like a plain and frugal republic. Whatever may reſemble the pomp of courts, or the enſigns of royalty, is baniſhed from this humble community. None of the productions of the olitory affect finery; but all are habited with the very perfection of decency. Here, thoſe celebrated qualities are eminently united, the utmoſt ſimplicity with the exacteſt neatneſs †.—A ſkilful hand has parcelled out the whole ground, into narrow beds, and intervening alleys. The ſame diſcreet management has aſſigned to each verdant family, a peculiar and diſtinct abode. So that there is no confuſion, amidſt the greateſt multiplicity; becauſe every

* —— *Ab ovo*
Uſque ad mala —— HOR.

† *Simplex munditiis.* HOR.

every individual knows it's proper home, and all the tribes are ranged with perfect regularity.—If it be pleaſing to behold their orderly ſituation, and their modeſt beauties; how much more delightful, to conſider the advantages, they yield! What a *fund* of choice *accommodations* is here! What a ſource of wholeſome dainties! And all, for the enjoyment of man. Why does the *parſley*, with her frizzled locks, ſhag the border; or why the *celery*, with her whitening arms, perforate the mold; but to render his ſoops ſavoury? The *aſparagus* ſhoots it's tapering ſtems, to offer him the firſt-fruits of the ſeaſon; and the *artichoke* ſpreads it's turgid top, to give him a treat of vegetable marrow. The tendrils of the * *cucumber* creep into the ſun; and, though baſking in it's hotteſt rays, they ſecrete for their maſter, and barrel up for his uſe, the moſt cooling juices of the ſoil. The *beans* ſtand firm, like files of embattled troops; the *peas* reſt upon their props, like ſo many companies of invalids; while both repleniſh their pods with the fatneſs of the earth, on purpoſe to pour it on their owner's table.—Not one ſpecies, among all this variety of herbs, is a cumberer of the ground. Not a ſingle plant, but is good for food, or ſome way ſalutary. With ſo beneficent an œconomy, are the ſeveral periods of their miniſtration ſettled; that no portion of the year is left deſtitute of nouriſhing eſculents. What is ſtill more obliging, every portion of the year affords *ſuch* eſculents, as are beſt ſuited to the temperature of the air, and the ſtate of our bodies.—Why then ſhould the *poſſeſſor* of ſo valuable a ſpot, envy the condition

* *Virgil*, with great conciſeneſs, and equal propriety, deſcribes the *cucumber*—

—*Tortuſque per herbam*
Creſceret in ventrem cucumis— Georg. IV.

Milton has (if we admit Dr. *Bentley*'s alteration, which is, I think, in *this* place, unqueſtionably juſt) almoſt tranſlated the *Latin* poet,

— — Forth crept
The *ſwelling* gourd— *Par. Loſt*, B. VII. l. 320.

of kings*? Since he may daily walk amidſt rows of peaceable and obſequious, though mute ſubjects. Every one of which tenders him ſome agreeable preſent, and pays him a willing tribute. Such as is moſt happily adapted, both to ſupply his wants, and to regale his taſte: to furniſh him, at once, with plenty and with pleaſure.

At a diſtance, one deſcries the mighty *hills*. They heave their huge ridges among the clouds; and look like the barriers of kingdoms, or the boundaries of nature. Bare and deformed as their ſurface may appear, their bowels are fraught with inward treaſures! Treaſures, lodged faſt in the *quarries*, or ſunk deep in the *mines*. From thence, induſtry may draw her implements, to plow the ſoil; to reap the grain; and procure every neceſſary convenience. From thence, art may fetch her materials, to rear the dome; to ſwell the organ; and form the nobleſt ornaments of politer life.

On another ſide, the *great deep* terminates the view. *There go the ſhips: there is that leviathan:* And there, in that world of waters, an inconceivable number of animals have their habitation.—This is the capacious *ciſtern* of the *univerſe*; which admits, as into a receptacle; and diſtributes, as from a reſervoir; whatever waters the whole globe. There's not a fountain, that guſhes in the unfrequented deſart; nor a rivulet, that flows in the remoteſt continent; nor a cloud, that ſwims in the higheſt regions of the firmament; but is fed by this all-repleniſhing ſource.—The ocean is the grand *vehicle* of *trade*, and the uniter of diſtant nations. To us it is peculiarly kind, not only as it wafts into our ports, the harveſt of every climate; and renders our iſland

* Hic *rarum tamen in dumis olus, albaque circum*
Lilia, verbenaſque premens, veſcumque papaver,
Regum æquabat opes animis: *ſeraque revertens*
Nocte domum, dapibus menſas onerabat inemptis.

VIRG. Georg. IV.

iſland the centre of traffic; but alſo as it ſecures us from foreign invaſions, by a ſort of impregnable entrenchment *.

Methinks, the view of this profuſe munificence inſpires a *ſecret delight*, and kindles a *diſintereſted good-will*.—While the "little hills clap their hands," and the luxuriant "vallies laugh and ſing;" who can forbear catching the general joy? Who is not touched, with lively ſenſations of pleaſure?—While the everlaſting Father, is ſcattering bleſſings through his whole family, and crowning the year with his goodneſs; who does not feel his breaſt overflowing, with a diffuſive benevolence?—My heart, I muſt confeſs, beats high with ſatisfaction; and breathes out *congratulatory wiſhes*, upon all the tenants of theſe rural abodes: "peace be within "your walls, as well as plenteouſneſs around your "dwellings." Live, ye highly favoured; live ſenſible of your benefits, and thankful to your benefactor. Look round upon theſe prodigiouſly large incomes of the fruitful ſoil, and call them (for you have free leave) all your own.—Only let me remind you of one very important truth. Let me ſuggeſt, and may you never forget; that your are *obliged* to CHRIST JESUS, for every one of theſe accommodations, which ſpring from the teeming earth, and the ſmiling ſkies.

* *Whoſe rampart was the ſea.* Nahum iii. 8.

I hope, this little excurſion into the country, will not be looked upon as a *departure* from my ſubject. Becauſe, a rural view, though no eſſential part of a garden, is yet a deſirable appendage, and neceſſary to *complete* it's beauty.—As uſefulneſs is the moſt valuable property, which can attend any production; *this* is the circumſtance, chiefly touched upon in the ſurvey of the landſcape. Though every piece of this extenſive and diverſified ſcene, is caſt in the moſt elegant mould; yet nothing is calculated merely for ſhew and parade. You ſee nothing formed in the taſte of the oſtentatious obeliſk, or inſignificant pomp of the pyramid. No ſuch idle expences were admitted into that conſummate plan, which regulated the ſtructure of the univerſe. All the decorations of nature are no leſs *advantageous*, than *ornamental*; ſuch as ſpeak the MAKER infinitely beneficent, as well as incomparably magnificent.

1. CHRIST* *made* them, when they were not.—He fetched them up from utter darkneſs; and gave them both their being and their beauty. He created the materials, of which they are compoſed; and moulded them into this endleſs multiplicity, of amiable forms, and uſeful ſubſtances. He arrayed the heavens, with a veſture of the mildeſt blue; and cloathed the earth, in a livery of the gayeſt green. His pencil ſtreaked, and his breath perfumed, whatever is beautiful or fragrant in the univerſe. His ſtrength ſet faſt the mountains; his goodneſs garniſhed the vales; and the ſame *touch* which healed the *leper*, wrought the whole viſible *ſyſtem* into this complete perfection.

2. CHRIST *recovered* them, when they were forfeited.—By *Adam*'s ſin, we loſt our right to the comforts of life, and fruits of the ground. His diſobedience was the moſt impious and horrid *treaſon*, againſt the KING of Kings. Conſequently, his whole patrimony became *confiſcated*: as well the portion of temporal good things, ſettled upon the human race during their minority;

* When I aſcribe the work of creation to the SON, I would by no means be ſuppoſed, to withhold the ſame honour, from the Eternal FATHER, and Ever-bleſſed SPIRIT. The acts of thoſe inconceivably glorious perſons are, like their eſſence, undivided and one. But I chooſe to ſtate the point in this manner, becauſe this is the manifeſt doctrine of the New Teſtament; is the expreſs belief of our church; and a moſt noble peculiarity of the goſpel revelation.—I chooſe it alſo, becauſe I would take every opportunity of inculcating, and celebrating, the *Divinity* of the REDEEMER. A truth, which imparts an unutterable dignity to Chriſtianity: a truth, which lays an immoveable foundation, for all the comfortable hopes of a Chriſtian: a truth, which will render the myſtery of our redemption, the wonder and delight of eternity: and with this truth, every one will obſerve, my aſſertion is inſeparably connected.

If any one queſtions, whether this be the doctrine of our church; let the *creed*, which we repeat in our moſt ſolemn devotions, determine his doubt: "I believe," ſays that form of ſound words, "in "one LORD JESUS CHRIST, very God of very GOD, *by whom all* "*things were made.*"—If it be farther inquired, from whence the *Nicene* Fathers derived this article of their faith? I anſwer, from the writings of the beloved Diſciple, who lay on the Saviour's boſom; and of that great Apoſtle, who had been caught up into the third heaven. *John* i. 3. *Col.* i. 16.

rity; as that everlaſting heritage reſerved for their enjoyment, when they ſhould come to full age. But the "ſeed of the woman," inſtantly interpoſing, took off the attainder, and redeemed the alienated inheritance. The firſt *Adam* being diſinherited, the ſecond *Adam** was *appointed heir of all things*, viſible as well as inviſible. And we hold our poſſeſſion of the former; we expect an inſtatement in the latter; purely by virtue of our alliance to him, and our union with him.

3. CHRIST *upholds* them, which would otherwiſe tumble into ruin.—*By him*, ſays the oracle of inſpiration, *all things conſiſt*†. His finger rolls the ſeaſons round, and preſides over all the celeſtial revolutions. His finger winds up the wheels, and impels every ſpring, of vegetative nature. In a word, the whole weight of the creation, reſts upon his mighty arm; and receives the whole harmony of it's motion, from his unerring

* *Heb.* i. 2.—In this ſenſe at leaſt, CHRIST is *the Saviour of all men*. The former and latter rain; the precious fruits of the earth; food to eat, and raiment to put on;—all theſe he purchaſed, even for his irreclaimable enemies. *They* eat of his bread, who lift up their heel againſt Him.

We learn from hence, in what a peculiar and endearing light, the *Chriſtian* is to contemplate the things that are ſeen. *Heathens* might diſcover an eternal Power, and infinite Wiſdom, in the ſtructure of the univerſe; Heathens might acknowledge a moſt ſtupendous liberality, in the unreſerved grant of the whole fabric, with all it's furniture, to the ſervice of man. But the Chriſtian ſhould ever keep in mind his forfeiture of them, and the price paid to redeem them. He ſhould receive the gifts of indulgent Providence, as the *Iſraelites* received their law, from the hand of a Mediator. Or rather, to him they ſhould come, not only iſſuing from the ſtores of an unbounded bounty, but ſwimming (as it were) in that crimſon tide, which ſtreamed from IMMANUEL's veins.

† *Col.* i. 17.—I beg leave to ſubjoin St. *Chryſoſtom*'s pertinent and beautiful note, upon the paſſage; by which it will appear, that the ſentiment of theſe ſections, is not merely a private opinion, but the avowed belief of the primitive Church. Τὰ λεγειν, ſays the eloquent Father, εις αὐλον χρειμαλαι η παντων υποστασις· ϗ μονον αὐλ⊖ αὐλα εκ τϗ μη ον⊖ εις το ειναι παρηγαγεν, αλλα και αὐ⊖ αὐλα συνεχει νυν· ωστε αν αποσπασθη της αὐλϗ προνοιας, απολοιτο και διαφθαρειη.

erring eye.—This habitable globe, with all it's rich appendages, and fine machinery, could no more continue, than they could create themſelves. *Start* they would into inſtant *confuſion*; or *drop* into their primitive *nothing*; did not his power ſupport, and his wiſdom regulate them, every moment. In conformity to his will, they ſubſiſt ſtedfaſt and invariable in their orders; and wait only for his ſovereign nod, to "fall a-"way like water, that runneth apace."

4. CHRIST* *actuates* them, which would otherwiſe be lifeleſs and inſignificant.—Penſioners they are, conſtant penſioners, on his bounty; and borrow their *all* from his fulneſs. *He only has life*; and whatever operates, operates by an emanation from his all-ſufficiency. Does the grape refreſh you, with it's enlivening juices? It is by a warrant received, and virtue derived, from the Redeemer. Does bread ſtrengthen your heart, and prove the ſtaff of your life? Remember, that it is by the Saviour's appointment, and through the efficacy of his operation. You are charmed with *his* melody, when the "time of the ſinging of birds is come, and "the voice of the nightingale is heard in your land." You taſte *his* goodneſs in the luſcious fig, the melting peach, and the muſky flavour of the apricot. You ſmell *his* ſweetneſs in the opening honeyſuckle, and every odoriferous ſhrub.

Could theſe creatures ſpeak for themſelves, they would, doubtleſs, diſclaim all ſufficiency of their own, and aſcribe the whole honour to their Maker.—"We "are ſervants," would they ſay, "of HIM, who died "for you. *Ciſterns* only, dry ciſterns in ourſelves, we "*tranſmit*

* *John* v. 17. *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work*; or, I exert that unremitting and unwearied energy, which is the life of the creation.—Thus the words are paraphraſed by a maſterly expoſitor, who has illuſtrated the life of our bleſſed LORD, in the moſt elegant taſte of criticiſm; with the moſt amiable ſpirit of devotion; and without any mixture of the malignant leaven, or low ſingularities, of a party. See the *Family Expoſitor*, Vol. I. Sect. 47.

" *tranſmit* to mortals no more, than the uncreated " Fountain transfuſes into us. Think not, that, from " any ability of our own, we furniſh you, with aſſiſt- " ance, or adminiſter to your comfort. 'Tis the di- " vine energy, the divine energy alone, that works in " us, and does you good.—We *ſerve* you, O ye ſons of " men, that you may *love* him, who placed us in theſe " ſtations. O! love the LORD, therefore, all ye who " are ſupported by our miniſtry; or elſe we ſhall " groan*, with indignation and regret, at your abuſe " of our ſervices.—Uſe us, and welcome; for we are " yours, if ye are CHRIST'S. Crop our choiceſt beau- " ties; rifle all our treaſures; accommodate yourſelves " with our moſt valuable qualities: only let us be in- " centives to your *gratitude*, and motives to your *obe-* " *dience*."

Having ſurveyed the ſpacious ſky; and ſent a glance round the inferior creation; 'tis time to deſcend from this eminence, and confine my attention to the *beautiful ſpot* below.—Here nature, always pleaſing, every-where lovely, appears with peculiar attractions. Yonder, ſhe ſeems dreſſed in her diſhabille; grand, but irregular. Here, ſhe calls in her hand-maid art; and ſhines in all the delicate ornaments, which the niceſt cultivation is able to convey. *Thoſe*, are her common apartments, where ſhe lodges her ordinary gueſts; *this*, is her cabi- net of curioſities, where ſhe entertains her intimate ac- quaintance.—My eye ſhall often expatiate, over thoſe ſcenes of univerſal fertility: my feet ſhall ſometimes ruſh through the thicket, or traverſe the lawn, or ſtroll along the foreſt glade: but to this delightful re- treat, ſhall be my chief reſort. Thither, will I *make excurſions*; but here, will I *dwell*.

If, from my low procedure, I may form an alluſion to the moſt exalted practices; I would obſerve, upon this occaſion; that the celebrated *Eraſmus*, and our ju- dicious

* Rom. viii. 22.

dicious *Locke*, having trod the circle of the ſciencies, and ranged through the whole extent of *human* literature, at length betook themſelves ſolely to the *bible*. Leaving the ſages of antiquity, they ſat inceſſantly at the feet of JESUS. Wiſely they withdrew, from that immenſe multiplicity of learning; from thoſe endleſs tracts of amuſing erudition; where, noxious weeds are mixed with wholſome herbs; where, is generally a much larger growth of prickly ſhrubs, than of fruitful boughs. They ſpent their moſt mature hours, in thoſe hallowed gardens, which GOD's own wiſdom planted; which GOD's own Spirit watereth; and in which GOD's own Son is continually walking. Where, he meeteth thoſe that ſeek him; and revealeth to them the glories of his perſon, and the riches of his goodneſs.

Thus would I finiſh the remainder of my days! Having juſt *taſted* (what they call) the politer ſtudies; I would now devote my whole *application* to the lively oracles. From other purſuits, I might glean, perhaps, a few ſcattered fragments of low, of lean, of unſatisfactory inſtruction. From this, I truſt to reap a harveſt of the ſublimeſt truths; the nobleſt improvements; and the pureſt joys*.—Waft me then, O! waft my mind to *Sion*'s conſecrated bowers. Let my thoughts perpetually rove, through the awfully-pleaſing walks of inſpiration. Here, grow thoſe heaven-born plants, the trees of *life* and *knowledge*; whoſe ambroſial fruits we now may "take, and eat, and live for ever." Here, flow thoſe precious ſtreams of *grace* and *righteouſneſs*; whoſe living waters "whoſoever drinks, ſhall thirſt no "more." And, what can the fables of *Grecian* ſong, or the fineſt pages of *Roman* eloquence—what can they exhibit, in any degree comparable to theſe matchleſs prerogatives of revelation?—Therefore, though I ſhould not diſlike to pay a *viſit* now-and-then to my heathen maſters,

* *Quicquid docetur, veritas; quicquid præcipitur, bonitas; quicquid promittitur, felicitas.*

maſters, I would *live* with the prophets and apoſtles. With thoſe, I would carry on ſome occaſional correſpondence: but theſe ſhould be my boſom-friends; my inſeparable companions; "my delight, and my counſellors."

What *ſweets* are theſe, which ſo agreeably ſalute my noſtrils? They are the breath of the flowers; the incenſe of the garden.—How liberally does the jeſſamine diſpenſe her odoriferous riches? How deliciouſly has the woodbine embalmed this morning walk? The air is all perfume.—And is not this, another moſt engaging argument, to forſake the bed of *ſloth?* Who would lie diſſolved in ſenſeleſs ſlumbers; while ſo many breathing ſweets, invite him to a feaſt of fragrancy? Eſpecially conſidering, that the advancing day will exhale the volatile dainties. A *fugitive treat* they are, prepared only for the wakeful and induſtrious. Whereas, when the ſluggard lifts his heavy eyes, the flowers will droop; their fine ſcents be diſſipated; and, inſtead of this refreſhing humidity, the air will become a kind of liquid fire.

With this very motive, heightened by a repreſentation of the moſt charming pieces of morning ſcenery, the parent of mankind awakes his lovely conſort. There is ſuch a delicacy in the choice, and ſo much life in the deſcription of theſe rural images; that I cannot excuſe myſelf, without repeating the whole paſſage.—Whiſper it, ſome friendly *genius*, in the ear of every one, who is now ſunk in ſleep, and loſt to all theſe refined gratifications!

Awake: the morning ſhines, and the freſh field
Calls you: ye loſe the prime, to mark how ſpring
The tended plants, how blows the citron grove;
What drops the myrrh, and what the balmy reed;

How

How nature paints her colours; how the bee
Sits on the bloom, extracting liquid ſweets *.

How delightful is this fragrance! It is diſtributed in the niceſt *proportion*; neither ſo ſtrong, as to oppreſs the organs; nor ſo faint, as to elude them. We are ſoon cloyed at a ſumptuous banquet; but this pleaſure never loſes it's *poignancy*, never palls the appetite.—Here, luxury itſelf is innocent; or rather, in this caſe, indulgence is incapable of exceſs.—This balmy entertainment, not only regales the *ſenſe*, but † chears the very *ſoul*; and, inſtead of clogging, elates it's powers.—It puts me in mind of that ever memorable ſacrifice, which was once made in behalf of offending mortals. I mean the *ſacrifice of the bleſſed* JESUS; when he offered up himſelf to GOD, "for a ſweet-ſmelling ſavour." Such the Holy Spirit ſtiles that wonderful oblation: as if no image, in the whole ſenſible creation, was ſo proper to give us an idea of the *ineffable ſatisfaction*; which the Father of mercies conceived, from that unparalleled atonement; as the *pleaſing ſenſations*, which ſuch rich perfumes are capable of raiſing. "Thouſands of rams, "and ten thouſands of rivers of oil," from an apoſtate world; the moſt ſubmiſſive acknowledgments, added to the moſt coſtly offerings, from men of defiled hands, and unclean lips; what could they have effected? A prophet repreſents the "high and lofty One, that inhabiteth "eternity," turning himſelf away from ſuch filthy rags; turning himſelf away, with a diſdainful abhorrence ‡, as from the noiſome ſteams of a dunghill.—But in CHRIST'S immaculate holineſs; in CHRIST'S conſummate obedience; in CHRIST'S moſt precious blood-ſhedding; with what unimaginable complacency, does juſtice reſt ſatisfied, and vengeance acquieſce!—All thy *works*, O thou Surety-for ruined ſinners! all thy *ſufferings*, O thou ſlaugh-

* MILT. Par. Loſt, B. V. l. 20.

† *Ointment and perfume rejoice the heart.* Prov. xxvii. 9.

‡ Amos v. 21, 22.

ſlaughtered Lamb of GOD! as well as all thy *garments*, O thou bridegroom of thy church! *ſmell of myrrh, aloes, and caſſia**! They are infinitely more grateful to the eternal Godhead, than the choiceſt exhalations of the garden, than all the odours of the ſpicy Eaſt, can be to the human noſtrils.

As the altar of old ſanctified the gift; ſo this is the great propitiation, which recommends the obnoxious perſons, and unprofitable ſervices of the believing world. In *this*, may my ſoul be intereſted! By *this*, may it be reconciled to the Father!—There is ſuch a leprous depravity cleaving to my nature, as pollutes whatever I perform. My moſt profound adorations, and ſincereſt acts of religion, muſt not preſume to *challenge* a reward, but humbly *implore* forgiveneſs †. Renouncing, therefore, myſelf in every inſtance of duty; diſclaiming all ſhadow of confidence ‡ in any deeds of my own; may I now, and evermore, *be accepted through the beloved!*

What *colours*, what charming colours, are here! theſe, ſo nobly bold; and thoſe, ſo delicately languid. What a glow is enkindled in ſome! what a gloſs ſhines upon

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* Pſal. xlv. 8.

† A writer of diſtinguiſhed ſuperiority, *thus* addreſſes the great Obſerver of Actions, and Searcher of Hearts; and vindicates *my* ſentiments, while he ſo juſtly and beautifully utters his own:

Look down, great GOD, with pity's ſofteſt eye,
On a poor breathing particle in duſt.
His crimes forgive; forgive his virtues too,
Thoſe *ſmaller faults*, *half converts* to the right.
Night-Thoughts, No. IX.

‡ See page 44 and 45, in the *ſecond* edition of a moſt *candid* and *evangelical* little treatiſe, called CHRISTIANITY the Great ORNAMENT of Human Life.—"If Chriſtians happily avoid the *dangerous* extreme, and too often *fatal* rock, of a dead *fruitleſs* faith on the one hand, he [*i. e.* Satan] will endeavour, by all kind of plauſible inſinuations, to ſplit them on the oppoſite, *viz.* ſpiritual pride, oſtentation, and *dependence on their works*, as if THESE were the *meritorious* or *procuring* cauſe of all true peace, hope, conſolation, and divine acceptance.—Now this *ſelf-dependence* may be ranked among the *moſt dangerous* of the infernal politics, becauſe the fatal poiſon lies *deep*, and too often *undiſcerned*."

upon others! In one, methinks, I ſee the ruby with her bleeding radiance; in another, the ſapphire with her ſky-tinctured blue; in all, ſuch an exquiſite richneſs of dyes, as no other ſet of paintings in the univerſe can boaſt*.—With what a maſterly *ſkill*, is every one of the varying tints *diſpoſed!* Here, they ſeem to be thrown on with an eaſy daſh, of ſecurity and freedom; there, they are adjuſted by the niceſt touches, of art and accuracy. Thoſe which form the ground, are always ſo judiciouſly choſen, as to heighten the luſtre of the ſuperadded figures; while the verdure of the impalement, or the ſhadings of the foliage impart new livelineſs to the whole. Indeed; whether they are blended, or arranged; ſoftened, or contraſted; they are manifeſtly under the conduct of a taſte, that never miſtakes; a felicity, that never falls ſhort of; the very perfection of elegance.—Fine, inimitably fine, is the *texture* of the web; on which theſe ſhining treaſures are diſplayed. What are the labours of the *Perſian* looms, or the boaſted commodities of *Bruſſels*, compared with theſe curious manufactures of nature? Compared with theſe, the moſt admired chintſes loſe their reputation; even ſuperfine cambricks, appear coarſe as canvaſs in their preſence.

What a chearing argument does our Saviour derive from hence, to ſtrengthen our *affiance* in GOD! He directs us to learn a leſſon of heaven-depending faith, from every bird, that wings the air; and from every flower, that bloſſoms in the field. If providence, with unremitted care, ſupports thoſe inferior creatures; and arrays theſe inſenſible beings, with ſo much ſplendor; ſurely, he will in no-wiſe, with-hold from his elect children,

* —— —— —— Who can paint
Like *nature?* Can imagination boaſt,
Amid his gay creation, hues like theſe?
And can he mix them with that matchleſs ſkill,
And lay them on ſo delicately fine,
And loſe them in each other, as appears
In every bud that blows?— THOMS. *Spring.*

dren, "bread to eat, and raiment to put on."—Ye faithful followers of the Lamb, diſmiſs every low *anxiety*, relating to the needful *ſuſtenance* of life. He that feeds the ravens, from an inexhauſtible magazine; he that paints the plants, with ſuch ſurpaſſing elegance; in ſhort, he that provides ſo liberally, both for the animal and vegetable parts of his creation; will not, cannot, neglect his own people.—*Fear not, little flock*, ye peculiar objects of almighty love! *it is your Father's good pleaſure, to give you a kingdom* *. And, if he freely gives you, an everlaſting kingdom hereafter; is it poſſible to ſuppoſe, that he will deny you any neceſſary conveniencies here?

One cannot forbear reflecting, in this place, on the too prevailing humour, of being fond and oſtentatious of *dreſs* †. What an abject and miſtaken ambition is this! How unworthy the dignity of *immortal*, and the wiſdom

* Luke xii. 32.

† Mr. *Addiſon* has a fine remark on a female warrior, celebrated by *Virgil*. He obſerves, that with all her other great qualities, this *little foible* mingled itſelf. Becauſe, as the poet relates, an intemperate fondneſs for a rich and ſplendid ſuit of armour, betrayed her into ruin. In this circumſtance, our critic diſcovers a *moral* concealed; this he admires, as a neat, though oblique *ſatire*, on that trifling paſſion.—*Spect.* Vol. I. No. 15.

I would refer it to the judicious reader, whether there is not a beauty of the *ſame* kind, but touched with a *more* maſterly hand, in the ſong of *Deborah*.—Speaking of *Siſerah*'s mother, the ſacred euchariſt ode repreſents her, as anticipating, in her fond fancy, the victory of her ſon; and indulging the following ſoliloquy—*Have they not ſped? Have they not divided the prey? To* Siſera *a prey of divers colours, a prey of divers colours of needle-work; of divers colours of needle-work on both ſides; meet for the necks of them that take the ſpoil?*—She takes no notice of the ſignal ſervice, which her hero would do to his country, by quelling ſo dangerous an inſurrection. She never reflects on the *preſent* acclamations, the *future* advancement, and the *eternal* renown, which are the tribute uſually paid to a conqueror's merit. She can conceive, it ſeems, nothing greater, than to be clad in an embroidered veſture; and to trail along the ground, a robe of the richeſt dyes. This is, in *her* imagination, the moſt lordly ſpoil, he can win; the moſt ſtately trophy, he can erect.—It is alſo obſervable, how ſhe *dwells* upon the trivial circumſtance; reiterating it again and again. It has ſo charmed her ignoble heart;

ſo

of *rational* beings! Eſpecially, ſince theſe little productions of the earth, have indiſputably the pre-eminence, in ſuch outward embelliſhments.—Go; cloathe thyſelf with purple, and fine linen; trick thyſelf up in all the gay attire, which the ſhuttle or the needle can furniſh. Yet know, to the mortification of thy vanity, that the *native* elegance of a common daiſy*, eclipſes all this *elaborate* finery.—Nay, wert thou decked like ſome illuſtrious princeſs, on her coronation-day, in all the ſplendor of royal apparel; couldſt thou equal even *Solomon*, in the height of his magnificence and glory; yet would the meaneſt among the *flowery populace* outſhine thee. Every diſcerning eye, would give the preference, to theſe beauties of the † ground.—Scorn then to borrow thy recommendations, from a neat diſpoſition of threads, and a curious arrangement of colours. Aſſume a becoming greatneſs of temper. Let thy endowments be of the immortal kind. Study to be *all-glorious within*. Be cloathed with humility. Wear the ornament of a meek and quiet ſpirit‡. To ſay all in a word; *put on the*

ſo intirely ingroſſed her little views; that ſhe can *think* of nothing elſe; *ſpeak* of nothing elſe; and can hardly ever *deſiſt* from the darling topic.—Is not this a keen, though delicately couched cenſure, on that poor, contemptible, groveling taſte; which is enamoured with ſilken finery, and makes the *attributes* of a butterfly the *idol* of it's affections?

How conſpicuous, is the elevated and magnificent ſpirit of that venerable *Mother* in *Iſrael*; when viewed in compariſon with the low, the deſpicable turn of this *Canaaniti/h lady!*—Such ſtrong and beautiful *contraſts* are, I think, ſome of the moſt ſtriking excellencies of poetic painting: and in no book are they more frequently uſed, or expreſſed with greater life, than in the *ſacred* volumes of inſpiration.

* Peaceful and lowly in their native ſoil,
They neither know to ſpin, nor care to toil;
Yet with confeſs'd magnificence deride
Our mean attire, and impotence of pride. PRIOR.

† Mr. *Cowley*, with his uſual brilliancy of imagination, ſtiles them *Stars of earth.*

‡ How beautifully does the prophet deſcribe the *furniture* of a renewed and heavenly *mind*; under the ſimilitude of a rich and complete *ſuit of apparel! I will greatly rejoice in the* LORD; *my ſoul ſhall be joyful*

the LORD JESUS CHRIST *: let his *blood* be ſprinkled upon thy conſcience, and it ſhall be whiter than the virgin ſnows. Let his *righteouſneſs*, like a ſpotleſs robe, adorn thy inner man; and thou ſhalt be amiable, even in the moſt diſtinguiſhing eye of GOD. Let his bleſſed *Spirit* dwell in thy heart; and under his ſanctifying operations, thou ſhalt be made partaker of a divine nature.

Theſe are real excellencies; truly noble accompliſhments theſe. In this manner be arrayed, be beautified; and thou wilt not find a rival, in the feathers of a peacock, or the foliation of a tulip. Theſe will exalt thee, far above the *low pretenſions* of lace and embroidery. Theſe will prepare thee to ſtand in the beatific preſence, and to take thy ſeat among the angels of light.

What an enchanting *ſituation* is this! One can ſcarce be melancholy within the atmoſphere of flowers. Such lively hues and delicious odours, not only addreſs themſelves agreeably to the ſenſes; but touch, with a ſurpriſing delicacy, the ſweeteſt movements of the mind.

— — To the heart inſpiring
Vernal † delight and joy. MILT. B. IV.

joyful in my GOD; *for he hath cloathed me with the garments of ſalvation; he hath covered me with the robe of righteouſneſs, as a bridegroom decketh himſelf with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herſelf with her jewels.* Iſa. lxi. 10.

* Rom. xiii. 4.

† "I would have my reader endeavour to MORALIZE this natural pleaſure of the ſoul, and to improve this *vernal delight*, as *Milton* calls it, into a *chriſtian virtue*. When we find ourſelves inſpired with this pleaſing inſtinct, this ſecret ſatisfaction and complacency ariſing from the beauties of the creation, let us conſider, to *whom* we ſtand indebted for all theſe entertainments of ſenſe: and *who* it is, that thus opens his hand, and fills the world with good.—Such an habitual diſpoſition of mind *conſecrates* every field and wood; turns an *ordinary walk* into a morning or evening ſacrifice; and will improve thoſe tranſient gleams, which naturally brighten up and refreſh the ſoul on ſuch occaſions, into an inviolable and perpetual ſtate of bliſs and happineſs." *Spect.* Vol. V. No. 394.

How often have I felt them diſſipate the *gloom* of thought, and tranſfuſe a ſudden gaiety through the dejected ſpirit! I cannot wonder, that kings deſcend from their *thrones*, to walk amidſt blooming ivory and gold; or retire from the moſt ſumptuous feaſt, to be recreated with the more refined ſweets of the garden. I cannot wonder, that queens forego, for a while, the compliments of a nation, to receive the tribute of the parterre; or withdraw from all the glitter of a *court*, to be attended with the more ſplendid *equipage* of a bed of flowers.—But, if this be ſo pleaſing; what tranſporting pleaſure muſt ariſe, from the fruition of uncreated excellency! O! what unknown delight, to enter into thy *immediate preſence*, moſt bleſſed LORD GOD! To ſee thee *, thou King of heaven, and LORD of glory, no longer "through a "glaſs darkly, but face to face!" To have all thy goodneſs, all thy greatneſs, ſhine before us; and be made glad for ever with the brighteſt diſcovery of thy perfections, with the ineffable joy of thy countenance!

This we cannot bear, in our preſent imperfect ſtate. The effulgence of unveiled divinity, would dazzle a mortal ſight. Our feeble faculties, would be *overwhelmed* with ſuch a *fulneſs* of ſuper-abundant bliſs, and muſt lie *oppreſſed*, under ſuch an exceeding great, eternal *weight* of glory.—But, when this corruptible, hath put on incorruption, the powers of the ſoul will be greatly invigorated; and theſe earthly tabernacles, will be tranſformed into the likeneſs of CHRIST's glorious body. Then, though "the moon ſhall be confounded, and "the

* *Iſaiah* repreſents the felicity of the righteous, in the everlaſting world, by this elegant and amiable image; *Thine eyes ſhall ſee the King in his beauty.*—*Milton* touches the ſame ſubject, with wonderful elevation and majeſty of thought:

— — — *They walk with God,*
High in ſalvation, and the climes of bliſs.

Words, which, like the fiery car, almoſt tranſport our affections to thoſe glorious abodes.——*Iſa.* xxxiii. 17. MILT. B. XI. v. 707.

"the ſun aſhamed *," when the LORD of Hoſts is revealed from heaven; yet, ſhall his faithful people be enabled to *ſee him as he is* †.

Here, then, my wiſhes, here be fixed. Be *this* your determined and invariable aim.—Here, my affections, here give a looſe to your whole ardor. Cry out, in the language of inſpiration; *This one thing have I deſired of the* LORD, *which*, with inceſſant earneſtneſs, *I will require*; *that I may dwell in the* celeſtial *houſe of the* LORD, *all the days of my* future *life*; *to behold the fair beauty of the* LORD ‡, and to contemplate with wonder and adoration—with unſpeakable and everlaſting rapture—all the attributes of the incomprehenſible Godhead.

Solomon, a moſt penetrating judge of human nature, knowing how highly mankind is charmed, with the fine qualities of flowers; has figured out the bleſſed JESUS, that "faireſt among ten thouſand," by theſe lovely repreſentatives. He ſtiles him § *The Roſe of Sharon*, and *The Lily of the Vallies* ‖; like the firſt, full of delights and communicable graces; like the laſt, exalted in majeſty, and complete in beauty.—In that ſacred paſtoral, he ranges the creation; borrows it's moſt finiſhed forms; and dips his pencil in it's choiceſt dyes, to preſent us with a ſketch of the amiableneſs of his perſon. His amiableneſs, who is the light of the world; the

* Iſa. xxiv. 23. † 1 John iii. 2.
‡ Pſal. xxvii. 4. § Cant. ii. 1.

Malus ut arboribus decori eſt, ut vitibus uvæ,
Utque roſæ campis, ut lilia vallibus alba,
Sic CHRISTUS *decus omne ſuis.*—

‖ By the *lily of the vallies*, I apprehend, is meant, not the flower which commonly paſſes under that denomination, and is comparatively mean; but the grand, majeſtic, garden lily; growing in a rich irriguous ſoil, where it flouriſhes in the moſt ample manner, and arrives at the higheſt perfection. The circumſtance of the vallies, added by the ſacred writer, is ſignificant not of the *ſpecies*, but of the *place*.—This is by far the nobleſt interpretation, and moſt exactly ſuitable to the ſpiritual ſenſe; which intimates, that the bleſſed JESUS delights to dwell, by the communications of his Spirit, in *humble* hearts.—*Eomikum ſhuſhut*—*Lilium vallibus gaudens.*

the glory of his church; the only hope, the ſovereign conſolation of ſinners: and exalted, infinitely exalted, not only above the ſublimeſt compariſon, but even "above all bleſſing and praiſe."—May I alſo make the ſame heavenly uſe, of all ſublunary enjoyments! Whatever is pleaſurable, or charming *below*; let it raiſe my deſire to thoſe delectable objects, which are *above*. Which will yield, not partial, but perfect felicity; not tranſient, but never ending, ſatisfaction and joy.—Yes, my ſoul, let theſe beauties in *miniature*, always remind thee of that glorious perſon; in whom "dwells all the "*fulneſs* of the Godhead bodily." Let theſe little emanations, teach thee to thirſt after the eternal fountain. O! may the creatures, be thy conſtant clue to the Creator! for this is a certain truth, and deſerves thy frequent recollection, demands thy moſt attentive conſideration; that the whole compaſs of finite perfection, is only a faint * *ray* ſhot from that immenſe ſource—is only a ſmall *drop*, derived from that inexhauſtible ocean—of all good.

What a ſurpriſing *variety* is obſervable, among the flowery tribes! How has the bountiful hand of providence, diverſified theſe niceſt pieces of his workmanſhip! added the charms of an endleſs novelty, to all their other perfections!—A conſtant uniformity would ſoon render the entertainment tireſome, or inſipid; therefore, every ſpecies is formed on a ſeparate plan, and exhibits ſomething entirely *new*. The faſhion ſpreads not from family to family; but every one has a mode of it's own, which is truly original. The moſt curſory glance, perceives an apparent difference, as well as a peculiar delicacy, in the *airs* and *habits*, the *attitude* and *lineaments*, of every diſtinct claſs.

Some

* — Thou ſitt'ſt above all heav'ns,
To us inviſible, or *dimly ſeen*
In theſe thy loweſt works; yet theſe declare
Thy goodneſs beyond thought, and pow'r divine.
MILT. Book V.

Some rear their heads, with a majeſtic mien; and overlook, like *ſovereigns* or *nobles*, the whole parterre. Others ſeem more moderate in their aims, and advance only to the middle ſtations; a genius turned for heraldry, might term them, the *gentry* of the border. While others, free from all aſpiring views, creep unambitiouſly on the ground, and look like the *commonalty* of the kind.—Some are interſected with elegant *ſtripes*, or ſtudded with radiant *ſpots*. Some affect to be genteelly *powdered*, or neatly *fringed*; while others are plain in their aſpect, unaffected in their dreſs, and content to pleaſe with a naked *ſimplicity*. Some aſſume the monarch's *purple*; ſome look moſt becoming in the virgin's *white*; but *black*, doleful black, has no admittance into the wardrobe of ſpring. The weeds of mourning would be a manifeſt indecorum, when nature holds an univerſal feſtival. She would, now, inſpire none but delightful ideas; and therefore always makes her appearance in ſome * amiable ſuit.—Here, *ſtands* a warrior, clad with crimſon; there, *ſits* a magiſtrate, robed in ſcarlet; and yonder, *ſtruts* a pretty fellow, that ſeems to have dipped his plumes in the rainbow, and glitters in all the gay colours of that reſplendent arch. Some *riſe* into a curious cup, or *fall* into a ſet of beautiful bells. Some *ſpread* themſelves in a ſwelling tuft, or *croud* into a delicious cluſter.—In ſome, the predominant ſtain, ſoftens by the gentleſt *diminutions*; till it has even ſtole away from itſelf. The eye is amuſed at the agreeable deluſion; and we wonder to find ourſelves inſenſibly decoyed, into a quite different luſtre. In others, you would think, the fine tinges were emulous of pre-eminence. Diſdaining to mingle, they *confront* one another, with the reſolution of rivals, determined to diſpute the prize of beauty; while each is improved, by the oppoſition, into the higheſt vivacity of complexion.

How

* —*Nunc formoſiſſimus annus.* VIRG.

How manifold are thy works *, O LORD! Multiplied even to a prodigy. Yet *in wiſdom*, conſummate wiſdom, *haſt thou made them all.*—How I admire the *vaſtneſs* of the contrivance, and the *exactneſs* of the execution! Man, feeble man, with difficulty accompliſhes a ſingle work. Hardly, and after many efforts, does he arrive at a tolerable imitation of ſome one production of nature. But, the almighty Artiſt ſpoke millions of ſubſtances, into inſtantaneous being; the whole collection wonderfully various, and each individual completely perfect.—Repeated experiments generally, I might ſay, always diſcover errors or defects, in *our* happieſt inventions. Nay, what wins our approbation, at the preſent hour, or in this particular place, is very probably, in ſome remote period or ſome diſtant clime, treated with contempt. Whereas, *theſe* fine ſtructures have pleaſed every taſte, in every country, for almoſt ſix thouſand years. Nor has any † fault been detected in the original plan, nor any room left for the leaſt improvement upon the firſt model.—All our performances, the more *minutely* they are ſcanned, the more *imperfect* they appear. With regard to theſe delicate objects, the more we ſearch into their properties, the more we are raviſhed with their graces. They are ſure to diſcloſe freſh ſtrokes of the moſt maſterly ſkill; in proportion to the attention, with which they are examined.

Nor is the *ſimplicity* of the *operation* leſs aſtoniſhing, than the accuracy of the workmanſhip, or the infinitude of the effects. Should you aſk; "Where, and what are "the materials which beautify the blooming world? "What rich tints; what ſplendid dyes; what ſtores of "ſhining orions; ſtand by the heavenly Limner, when "he paints the robe of nature?" 'Tis anſwered, His powerful pencil needs no ſuch coſtly apparatus. A ſingle

* Pſalm civ. 24.

† Eccleſ. iii. 14. *I know, that whatſoever* GOD *doth, it ſhall be for ever; nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it.*

gle principle, under his conducting hand, branches out into an immenſity of the moſt varied, and moſt finiſhed forms. The *moiſture* of the earth, and of the circumambient air, paſſed through proper ſtrainers, and diſpoſed in a range of pellucid tubes: this performs all the wonders, and produces all the beauties of vegetation. This *creeps* along the fibres of the low-ſpread moſs; and *climbs* to the very tops of the lofty waving cedars. This, attracted by the root, and circulating through inviſible canals; this burſts into gems; expands itſelf into leaves; and cloaths the foreſt with all it's verdant honours.—This one*, *plain* and *ſimple*, cauſe gives birth to all the charms; which deck the youth, and maturity, of the year. This *bluſhes*, in the early hepatica; and *flames*, in the late advancing poppy. This *reddens* into blood, in the veins of the mulberry; and *attenuates* itſelf into leafen gold, to create a covering for the quince. This *breathes* in all the fragrant gales of our garden; and *weeps* odorous gum, in the groves of *Arabia*.—So † *wonderful* is our Creator in *counſel*, and ſo *excellent in working!*

In a grove of tulips, or a knot of pinks, one perceives a difference in almoſt every individual. Scarce any two, are turned, and tinctured, exactly alike. Each allows himſelf a little *particularity* in his *dreſs*, though all belong to one family: ſo that they are various, and yet the ſame.—A pretty emblem this, of the *ſmaller differences* between proteſtant chriſtians. There are modes in religion, which admit of variation, without prejudice to ſound faith, or real holineſs. Juſt as the drapery, on theſe pictures of the ſpring, may be formed after a variety

* "When every ſeveral effect has a particular ſeparate cauſe, this "gives no pleaſure to the ſpectator, as not diſcovering contrivance. "But that work is beheld with admiration and delight, as the reſult "of deep counſel, which is *complicated* in it's *parts*, and yet *ſimple* in "it's *operations*. Where a great variety of effects are ſeen to ariſe "from one principle operating uniformly." ABERNETHY *on the Attributes.*

† Iſa. xxviii. 29.

riety of patterns, without blemiſhing their beauty, or altering their nature.—Be it ſo then, that, in ſome points of inconſiderable conſequence, ſeveral of our brethren diſſent: yet, let us all live amicably and ſociably together; for we harmonize in *principles*, though we vary in *punctilios*. Let us join in converſation, and intermingle intereſts; diſcover no eſtrangement of behaviour, and cheriſh no alienation of affection. If any ſtrife ſubſiſts, let it be to follow our divine Maſter moſt cloſely, in humility of heart, and unblameableneſs of life. Let it be to ſerve one another moſt readily, in all the kind offices of a cordial friendſhip. Thus ſhall we be *united*, though *diſtinguiſhed*; united in the ſame grand fundamentals, though diſtinguiſhed by ſome ſmall circumſtantials; united in one important bond of brotherly love, though diſtinguiſhed by ſome ſlighter peculiarities of ſentiment.

Between chriſtians, whoſe judgments diſagree only about a form of prayer, or manner of worſhip, I apprehend, there is no more *eſſential* difference, than between flowers which bloom from the ſame kind of ſeed, but happen to be ſomewhat diverſified in the mixture of their colours.—Whereas, if *one* denies the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and degrades the incarnate God to the meanneſs of a mere creature; if *another* cries up the worthineſs of human works, and depreciates the alone-meritorious righteouſneſs of the glorious Mediator; if a *third* addreſſes the incommunicable honours to a finite being, and bows to the image, or prays to the ſaint—theſe are errors, extremely derogatory to the Redeemer's dignity, and not a little prejudicial to the comfort of his people. Againſt theſe to remonſtrate; againſt theſe to urge every argument, and uſe every diſſuaſive; beſpeaks not the cenſorious bigot, but the friend of truth, and the lover of mankind.—Whereas, to ſtand neuter and ſilent, while ſuch principles are propagated, would be an inſtance of criminal remiſſneſs,

rather

rather than of chriſtian moderation.—For the *perſons*, we will not fail to maintain a tender compaſſion: we will not ceaſe to put up earneſt interceſſions: we will alſo acknowledge and love, whatever is excellent and amiable in their character. Yet, we dare not ſubſcribe their *creed*; we cannot remit our aſſiduous, but kind endeavours; if by any means we may reconcile them to a more *ſcriptural* belief, and a *purer* worſhip*.

Another circumſtance, recommending and endearing the flowery creation, is their *regular ſucceſſion*. They make not their appearance all at once, but in an orderly rotation. While a proper number of theſe obliging retainers are in waiting, the others abſcond; but hold themſelves in a poſture of ſervice, ready to take their turn, and fill each his reſpective ſtation, the inſtant it becomes vacant.—The *ſnowdrop*, foremoſt of the lovely train, breaks her way through the frozen ſoil, in order to preſent her early compliments to her lord. Dreſſed in the robe of innocency, ſhe ſteps forth, fearleſs of danger; long before the trees have ventured to unfold their leaves, even while the icicles, are pendent on our houſes, —Next, peeps out the *crocus*; but cautiouſly, and with an air of timidity. She hears the howling blaſts, and ſkulks cloſe to her low ſituation. Afraid, ſhe ſeems, to make large excurſions from her root; while ſo many ruffian winds are abroad, and ſcouring along the æther. Nor is the *violet* laſt, in this ſhining embaſſy of the year. Which, with all the embelliſhments, that would grace

* In ſome former editions, I expreſſed myſelf, on this point, *unwarily* and *harſhly*. But my meaning, and real ſentiments, were no other than thoſe repreſented above.—The reader, from ſuch unguarded intimations, might too naturally be led to conclude, That the author avows, and would ſtir up, a ſpirit of *perſecution*. But, this is a method of dealing with opponents in religious doctrines, which he diſclaims, as abſurd; and abhors, as iniquitous. He is for no force, but that of rational conviction; for no conſtraint, but that of affectionate perſuaſion. *Thus*, if you pleaſe, *compel them to come in*, Luke xiv. 23.

a royal garden, condeſcends to line our hedges, and grow at the feet of briers. Freely, and without any ſolicitation, ſhe diſtributes the bounty of her emiſſive ſweets: while herſelf, with an exemplary humility, retires from ſight; ſeeking rather to adminiſter pleaſure, than to win admiration *. Emblem, expreſſive emblem, of thoſe *modeſt* virtues, which delight to bloom in obſcurity: which extend a chearing influence to multitudes, who are ſcarce acquainted with the ſource of their comforts! Motive, engaging motive to that *ever-active* beneficence; which ſtays not for the importunity of the diſtreſſed, but anticipates their ſuit, and prevents them with the bleſſings of it's goodneſs!—The poor *polyanthus*, that lately adorned the border with her ſparkling beauties; and, tranſplanted into our windows, gave us a freſh entertainment; is now no more. I ſaw her complexion fade; I perceived her breath decay; till at length ſhe expired, and dropt into her grave.—Scarce have we ſuſtained this loſs, but in comes the *auricula*, and more than retrieves it. Arrayed ſhe comes, in a ſplendid variety of amiable forms; with an eye of cryſtal, and garments of the moſt gloſſy ſattin; exhaling perfume, and powdered with ſilver. A very diſtinguiſhed proceſſion this! The favourite care of the floriſt! Scarce one among them, but is dignified with a character of renown; or has the honour to repreſent, ſome celebrated toaſt. But theſe alſo, notwithſtanding their illuſtrious titles, have exhauſted their whole ſtock of fragrance, and are mingled with the meaneſt duſt.—Who could forbear grieving at their departure, did not the *tulips* begin to raiſe themſelves on their fine wands, or ſtately ſtalks? They fluſh the parterre with one of the gayeſt dreſſes, that blooming nature wears. Did ever *beau* or *belle* make ſo gaudy an appearance, in a birth-night ſuit? Here, one may behold the innocent wantonneſs of beauty. Here, ſhe indulges a thouſand freaks

* *Prodeſſe quam conſpici.*

freaks, and ſports herſelf in the moſt charming diverſity of colours. Yet, I ſhould wrong her, were I to call her a *coquet*; becauſe ſhe plays her lovely changes, not to enkindle diſſolute affections, but to diſplay her Creator's glory.—Soon ariſes the *anemone*; incircled at the bottom, with a ſpreading robe; and rounded, at the top, into a beautiful dome. In it's looſely-flowing mantle, you may obſerve a noble negligence; in it's gently-bending tufts, the niceſt ſymmetry. I would term it, the *fine gentleman* of the garden; becauſe, it ſeems to have learnt the ſingular addreſs, of uniting ſimplicity with refinement, of reconciling art and eaſe. —The ſame month has the merit of producing the *ranunculus*. All bold and graceful, it expands the riches of it's foliage; and acquires, by degrees, the loveliеſt enamel in the world. As perſons of intrinſic worth, diſdain the ſuperficial arts of recommendation, practiſed by *fops*; ſo, this lordly flower ſcorns to borrow any of it's excellence, from powders and eſſences. It needs no ſuch attractives, to render it the darling of the curious; being ſufficiently engaging from the elegance of it's figure, the radiant variety of it's tinges, and a certain ſuperior dignity of aſpect.—Methinks, nature improves in her operations. Her lateſt ſtrokes are moſt maſterly. To crown the collection, ſhe introduces the *carnation*. Which captivates every eye, with a noble ſpread of graces; and charms another ſenſe, with a profuſion of exquiſite odours. This ſingle flower, has centered in itſelf, the perfections of all the preceding. The moment it appears, it ſo commands our attention, that we ſcarce regret the abſence of the reſt.—The *gilly-flower*, like a real friend, attends you through all the viciſſitudes and alterations of the ſeaſon. While others make a tranſient viſit only, this is rather an inhabitant, than a gueſt in your gardens; adds *fidelity* to *complaiſance*.

It is in vain to attempt a catalogue of theſe amiable gifts. There is an endleſs *multiplicity*, in their charac-

ters; yet an invariable *order* in their approaches. Every month, almoſt every week, has it's peculiar ornaments; not ſervilely copying the works of it's predeceſſor, but forming, ſtill forming, and ſtill executing ſome new deſign. So laviſh is the fancy, yet ſo exact is the proceſs, of nature!

Here, let me ſtand a while, to contemplate this *diſtribution* of flowers, through the ſeveral periods of the year.—Were they all to bloſſom together; there would be at once a promiſcuous *throng*, and at once a total *privation*. We ſhould ſcarce have an opportunity, of adverting to the dainty qualities of half; and muſt ſoon loſe the agreeable company of them all. But now, ſince every ſpecies has a ſeparate poſt to occupy; and a diſtinct interval for appearing; we can take a leiſurely and minute ſurvey of each ſucceeding ſet. We can view and review their forms; enter into a more intimate acquaintance with their charming accompliſhments; and receive all thoſe pleaſing ſervices, which they are commiſſioned to yield.—This remarkable piece of œconomy, is productive of another very valuable effect. It not only places, in the moſt advantageous light, every particular community; but is alſo a ſure proviſionary reſource, againſt the frailty of the whole nation. Or, to ſpeak more truly, it renders the flowery tribes a ſort of * *immortal* corps. For, though ſome are continually dropping; yet, by this expedient, others are as continually riſing, to beautify our borders, and prolong the entertainment.

What *goodneſs* is this, to provide ſuch a ſeries of gratifications for mankind! Both to diverſify, and perpetuate, the fine collation! To take care, that our paths ſhould be, in a manner, inceſſantly ſtrewed with flowers!

* In alluſion to the celebrated practice of the *Perſian* Kings; "who maintained, for their life-guard, a body of troops called *Immortal*; becauſe it perpetually ſubſiſted: for as ſoon as any of the "men died, another was immediately put into his place." Rollin's *Antient Hiſtory*, Vol. II.

ers!—And what *wiſdom*, to bid every one of theſe inſenſible beings, know the preciſe juncture for their coming forth! Inſomuch that no actor on a ſtage, can be more exact in performing his part; can make a more regular entry, or a more punctual exit.

Who imboldens the *daffodil*, to venture abroad in *February*; and to truſt her flowering gold, with inclement and treacherous ſkies? Who informs the various tribes of *fruit-bearing bloſſoms*; that vernal ſuns, and a more genial warmth, are fitteſt for their delicate texture? Who teaches the *clove* to ſtay; till hotter beams are prepared, to infuſe a ſpicy richneſs into her odours, and tincture her complexion with the deepeſt crimſon?—Who diſpoſes theſe beautiful troops, into ſuch orderly bodies; *retarding* ſome, and *accelerating* others? Who has inſtructed them to *file off*, with ſuch perfect regularity; as ſoon as the duty of their reſpective ſtation is over? And, when one detachment retires, who gives the ſignal, for another immediately to advance? Who, but that unerring Providence, which, from the higheſt thrones of angels, to the very loweſt degrees of exiſtence, orders all things in "number, weight, and meaſure!"

Theſe, O my ſoul, are the regulations of that moſt adorable, that moſt beneficent Being, who bowed the heavens; came down to dwell on earth; and united the *frailty* of thy mortal nature, to all the *glories* of his Godhead. All the honour of this admirable eſtabliſhment, belongs to thy Ranſom, thy Surety, thy Saviour. To HIM it belongs, who ſuſtained the *vengeance*, which thou hadſt deſerved, and waſt doomed to ſuffer; who fulfilled the *obedience*, which thou waſt obliged, but unable, to perform; and who humbled himſelf (ſtupendous, ineffable loving-kindneſs) humbled himſelf to death, even the death of the croſs.—He formed this vaſt machine, and adjuſted it's nice dependencies. The pillars, that ſupport it; the embelliſhments, that adorn it; and the laws, that govern it; are the reſult of his unſearchable coun-

ſels. O! the *heights* of his majeſty, and the *depths* of his abaſement!

Which ſhall we admire moſt, his eſſential *greatneſs*, or his free *grace*? He created the exalted ſeraph, that ſings in glory; and every the minuteſt inſect, that flutters in air, or crawls in duſt. He marks out a path, for all thoſe globes of light, which travel the circuit of the ſkies; and diſdains not to rear the violet from it's lowly bed, or to plait the daiſy which dreſſes our plains. So *grand* are his operations; yet ſo *condeſcending* his regards!—If ſummer, like a ſparkling bride, is brilliant and glorious in her apparel; what is this, but a feeble reflection on his uncreated *effulgence*? If autumn, like a munificent hoſt, opens her ſtores, and gives us all things richly to enjoy; what is this but a little taſte of his inexhauſtible *liberality*? If thunders roar, you hear the ſound of his trumpet; If lightnings glare, you ſee the launching of his glittering ſpear: If "the perpetual "hills be ſcattered, and the everlaſting mountains bow-"ed," you behold a *diſplay*—No, ſays the prophet, you have rather * *The hiding of his power*. So immenſe is his power; ſo uncontroulable and inconceivable; that all theſe mighty works are but a *ſketch*, in which more is concealed than diſcovered.

Thus,

* *Hab.* iii. 4. Nothing can be more magnificently conceived, than the *imagery* of this whole chapter; and upon the foot of our interpretation, nothing was ever more delicately and nobly turned, than the *ſentiment* of this clauſe. Other ſenſes of the paſſage, I acknowledge, may be aſſigned with equal propriety. But none, I think, can be imagined ſo *majeſtic* and *ſublime*. As the original will fairly admit of it; as it carries no diſagreement with the context; and expreſſes a moſt important, as well as undoubted truth; I hope, I may be permitted to uſe it, at leaſt by way of accommodation.—Eſpecially, as it ſuggeſts one of the fineſt *mottos* imaginable; wherewith to inſcribe all the viſible productions of the Creator's hand. When, ſtruck with aſtoniſhment, we conſider their grandeur, beauty, and conſummate perfections; let us, in juſtice to their Author, apply the exalted reflection of this ſacred ode: "In all theſe *is the hiding*, ra-"ther than an adequate diſplay, *of his* matchleſs *power*. Though they "chal-

Thus, I think, we ſhould always view the viſible ſyſtem; with an evangelical *teleſcope* (if I may be allowed the expreſſion), and with an evangelical *microſcope*. Regarding CHRIST JESUS, as the great projector and architect; who planned, and executed, the amazing ſcheme. Whatever is magnificent or valuable; tremendous or amiable; ſhould ever be aſcribed to the Redeemer. This, is the chriſtian's *natural philoſophy*. With regard to this method of conſidering the things that are ſeen; we have an inſpired apoſtle, for our preceptor and precedent. Speaking of CHRIST, he ſays; "Thou, LORD, in the beginning, haſt laid the foun-"dation of the earth; and the heavens are the work of "thy hands."—Did we carefully attend to this leading principle, in all our examinations of nature; it would, doubtleſs, be a moſt powerful means of *enkindling* our love, and * *ſtrengthening* our faith. When I look round upon millions of noble ſubſtances, and carry with me this tranſ-

"challenge our praiſe, and ſurpaſs our comprehenſion; yet they are "by no means the utmoſt exertions, but rather ſome ſlighter eſſays, "of omnipotent ſkill."—*Milton*, relating the overthrow of the fallen angels, introduces a grand circumſtance, not much unlike the preceding. *Meſſiah*, unaided and alone, had routed an innumerable hoſt of apoſtate ſpirits. This was great and marvellous. But to create a juſter idea of the illuſtrious Conqueror, our poet beautifully adds;

Yet half his ſtrength he put not forth.

If we forget to make the ſame remark, when we contemplate GOD in his works; we muſt neceſſarily form very ſcanty conceptions of that SUPREME BEING, before whom all nations are as a "drop of "a bucket, and are counted as the ſmall duſt of the balance."

* The apoſtles, I obſerve, delight to uſe this method, of diſplaying the *honours* of the Redeemer, and eſtabliſhing the *faith* of his people.—The beloved diſciple, teaching that moſt precious doctrine, "of a "Lamb ſlain to take away the ſins of the world;" in order to evince the ſufficiency of CHRIST's ſacrifice for this bleſſed purpoſe, affirms, That *All things were made by Him: and without Him was not any thing*, no, not ſo much as one ſingle being, *made*, John i. 3.—St. *Paul*, preaching the ſame glad tidings to the *Coloſſians*, and expreſsly maintaining, That we have redemption through his blood; ſeems to foreſee an objection of this kind. "To expiate tranſgreſſions againſt

"an

tranſporting reflection, "The Maker of them all, ex-"pired on a croſs for me;" how can I remain any longer indifferent? Muſt not the *coldeſt* heart, begin to glow with gratitude?—When I ſurvey an immenſity of the fineſt productions imaginable; and remember, that the author of them all, is my "righteouſneſs and my re-"demption;" how can I chooſe but repoſe the moſt *chearful* confidence, in ſuch a Mediator?

Let me add one more remark, upon the admirable *adjuſtment* of every particular, relating to theſe fine colonies planted in the parterre.—With ſuch accuracy and correctneſs, is their ſtructure finiſhed; that any the leaſt conceivable alteration, would very much impair their perfection. Should you ſee, for inſtance, the nice diſpoſition of the *tulip*'s attire fly abroad, diſorderly and irregular, like the flaunting *woodbine*: ſhould the *jeſſamine* rear her diminutive head, on thoſe grand columns which ſupport the *hollihock*: ſhould the erect and manly aſpect of the *piony*, hang down with a penſive air, like the flexile bells of the *hyacinth*: ſhould that noble plainneſs, which diſtinguiſhes the *lily*, be exchanged for the glittering fringes, which edge the *pink*; or the gaudy ſtains, which

"an infinite Majeſty, is a moſt prodigious act. It muſt coſt vaſtly "more than any common ſurety can pay, to redeem a ſinful world. "What reaſon have we to believe, that JESUS is equal to this "mighty undertaking?" All poſſible reaſon, replies the apoſtle, from the dignity of his perſon; for He is *the image of the inviſible* GOD; and from the greatneſs of his works, for *by Him all things were made*. Conſider the operations of His hands, and you cannot doubt the atoning efficacy of His death, *Col.* i. 15, 16.—The author of the epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, falls exactly into the ſame train of arguing. Declaring, that CHRIST JESUS has purged our ſins, by the ſacrifice of Himſelf; he proves His ample ability for this tremendous office, from His eſſential excellence, becauſe He is the *brightneſs of his Father's glory*; and from his admirable works, becauſe *He made the worlds, and upholdeth all things by the word of his power*, Heb. i. 2, 3.—Which truth, as it is ſo important in itſelf; of ſuch ſignal comfort to chriſtians; and ſo particularly inſiſted on, by the inſpired writers; I hope, I ſhall need no apology, for an attempt to illuſtrate and enforce it, in a kind of evangelical *Deſcant* upon *Creation*, annexed to theſe Reflections.

which bedrop the *iris*: ſhould thoſe tapering pillars, which ariſe in the middle of it's vaſe, and, tipt with golden pendants, give ſuch a luſtre to the ſurrounding pannels of alabaſter—ſhould thoſe ſink and diſappear, like the chives which cover the heart of the *anemone*:—In many of theſe caſes, would not the tranſpoſition be fantaſtical and aukward? In all, to the apparent *prejudice* of every individual?

Again; with regard to the *time* of their appearing; this circumſtance is ſettled, by a remarkable foreſight and precaution. What would become of the *ſailor*; if, in very ſtormy weather, he ſhould raiſe a lofty maſt, and croud it with all his canvaſs! Such would be the ill effect; if the moſt ſtately ſpecies of flowers, ſhould preſume to come abroad, in the bluſtering months. Ah! how would they rue the imprudent boldneſs! Therefore, thoſe only that ſhoot the ſhorteſt ſtems, and diſplay the ſmalleſt ſpread of leaves, or (if you pleaſe) carry the leaſt ſail, are launched amidſt the blowing ſeaſons.—How injudiciouſly would the *perfumer* act; if he ſhould unſeal his fineſt eſſences, and expoſe them to the northern winds, or wintry rains! Our blooming artiſts of the aromatic profeſſion, at leaſt the moſt delicate among them, ſeem perfectly aware of the conſequences of ſuch a procedure. Accordingly, they poſtpone the opening of their odoriferous treaſures; till a ſerener air, and more * unclouded ſkies, grant a protection to their amiable traffic: till they are under no more apprehenſions, of having their ſpicy cells rifled by rude blaſts, or drowned in inceſſant ſhowers.

What

* *Caſimir*, in a very poetical manner, addreſſes himſelf to the dormant roſe; and moſt prettily invites her to *venture abroad*, by the mention of theſe two circumſtances:

Siderum ſacros imitata vultus,
Quid lates dudum, roſa? Delicatum
Effer e terris caput. O tepentis
Filia cœli.

Jam

What a ſtriking argument is here for *reſignation*; unfeigned reſignation, to all the diſpoſals of *providence*! Too often are our diſſatisfied thoughts apt to find fault with divine diſpenſations. We tacitly arraign our Maker's conduct, or queſtion his kindneſs with regard to ourſelves. We fancy our lot, not ſo commodiouſly ſituated; or our condition, not ſo happily circumſtanced; as if we had been placed in ſome other ſtation of life.—But, let us behold this exquiſitely nice regulation of the *minuteſt* plants; and be aſhamed of our *repining* folly. Could any fibre in their compoſition, be altered; or one line in their features, be tranſpoſed; without clouding ſome of their beauties? Could any fold in their veſtments, be varied; or any link in their orderly ſucceſſion, be broken; without injuring ſome delicate property? And does not that all-ſeeing eye, which preſerves ſo exact a harmony, among theſe *pretty toys*; maintain as watchful a care, over his *rational creatures*? Does he chooſe the propereſt ſeaſon, for the cowſlip to ariſe, and drink the dews? And can he neglect the concerns, or misjudge the conveniencies, of his ſons and daughters? he, who has ſo completely diſpoſed, whatever pertains to the vegetable œconomy; that the leaſt diminution or addition, would certainly hurt the finiſhed ſcheme; does, with-

Jam tibi nubes *fugiunt* aquoſæ,
Quas fugant albis Zephyri *quadrigis*;
Jam tibi mulcet Boream *jocantis*
Aura Favoni.

Child of the ſummer, charming roſe,
No longer in confinement lie;
Ariſe to light; thy form diſcloſe;
Rival the ſpangles of the ſky.

The *rains* are gone; the ſtorms are o'er;
Winter retires to make thee way:
Come then, thou ſweetly bluſhing flow'r;
Come, lovely ſtranger, come away.

The *ſun* is dreſs'd in beaming *ſmiles*,
To give thy beauties to the day:
Young *Zephyrs* wait, with gentleſt *gales*,
To fan thy boſom, as they play.

without all peradventure, preſide, with equal attention, over the intereſts of his own people.

Be ſtill, then, thou uneaſy mortal *; know, that GOD is unerringly wiſe; and be aſſured, that, amidſt the greateſt multiplicity of beings, he does not overlook thee. Thy Saviour has given me authority to aſſert, that thou art of far ſuperior value, in the eſtimate of omnipotence, than all the herbage of the field.—If his ſacred will, ordains *ſickneſs* for thy portion; never dare to imagine, that uninterrupted health would be more advantageous. If he pleaſes to with-hold, or take away, *children*; never preſume to conclude, that thy happineſs is blaſted, becauſe thy hopes of an increaſing family are diſappointed. He, that marſhals all the ſtarry hoſt, and ſo accurately arranges every the meaneſt ſpecies of herbs; HE orders all the *peculiarities*, all the *changes* of thy ſtate, with a vigilance, that nothing can elude; with a goodneſs, that endureth for ever.—Bow thy head, therefore, in humble acquieſcence. Reſt ſatisfied, that *whatever is*, by the appointment of heaven †, *is right*, is beſt.

Among

* *Permittas ipſis expendere numinibus, quid*
Conveniat nobis, rebuſque ſit utile noſtris.
Nam pro jucundis aptiſſima *quæque dabunt dii;*
Carior eſt illis homo, quam ſibi.— JUV.

Since all the downward tracts of time
GOD's watchful eye ſurveys;
O! who ſo wiſe to chooſe our lot,
And regulate our ways?

Since none can doubt his equal love,
Unmeaſurably kind;
To his *unerring*, *gracious* will,
Be ev'ry wiſh reſign'd.

Good when he gives, ſupremely good;
Nor leſs, when he denies;
Ev'n croſſes, from his ſov'reign hand,
Are bleſſings in diſguiſe.

† *Whatever is, is right.*—If Mr. *Pope* underſtands the maxim, according to the *limitation* ſuggeſted above, he ſpeaks a moſt undeniable and glorious truth. But if that great poet includes whatever comes

to

Among all the productions of the third creating-day, this of flowers ſeems to be peculiarly deſigned for man. Man has the *monopoly* of this favour: it is conferred on him, by a ſort of excluſive charter. See the *imperial crown*, ſplendid and beautifully grand! See the *tuberoſe*, delicate and languiſhingly fair! See all the pomp and glory of the parterre; where paint and perfume do wonders. Yet the inferior animals are neither ſmit with their beauties, nor regaled with their odours. The horſe never ſtands ſtill, to gaze upon their charms; nor does the ox turn aſide, to browſe upon their ſweets. Senſes they have, to diſcern theſe curious objects in the *groſs*; but no taſte, to *diſtinguiſh* or reliſh their fine accompliſhments. —Juſt ſo, carnal and unenlightened men, may underſtand the literal meaning of ſcripture; may comprehend the evidences of it's divine inſpiration. Yet have no ardent *longing* for the ſpiritual bleſſings, it offers; ſee "no form or comelineſs" in the Saviour, it deſcribes, ſo as to render him the *ſupreme* deſire of their ſouls.

The *chief* end of theſe beautiful appearances, philoſophers ſay, is to enfold and cheriſh the embryo ſeed; or to ſwathe the tender body, during it's infant ſtate.—

But,

to paſs, through the wild and extravagant paſſions of men; ſurely no thinking perſon, at leaſt no Chriſtian, can accede to his opinion.—What GOD orders, is *wiſe*, beyond all poſſibility of correction; and *good*, above all that we can aſk or think. His decrees, are the reſult of infinite diſcernment; and his diſpenſations, the iſſues of unbounded benevolence.—But man, fallen man, is hurried away, by his luſts, into a thouſand irregularities; which are deplorably evil in *themſelves*, and attended with *conſequences*, manifeſtly pernicious to ſociety.—Let the ſentiment, therefore, be reſtrained to the diſpoſals of Heaven, and I moſt readily ſubſcribe it. But, if it be extended to the conduct of men, and the effects of their folly; I think myſelf obliged, to enter my proteſt againſt it. For, whatever kindles the divine indignation—is cauſe of final ruin to the author—is ſtrictly forbidden by GOD's holy word—is contrary to the whole deſign of his revealed will, and the very reverſe of his eſſential attributes—*This*, cannot poſſibly be right. *This*, is moſt undoubtedly wrong. Omnipotence, indeed, can over-rule it, and educe good from it. But the very notion of *over-ruling*, ſuppoſes it to be abſolutely *wrong* in itſelf.

But, whatever is the chief end of nature; 'tis certain, she never departs from the design, of administering *delight* to mankind *. This is inseparably connected with her other views.—Were it only to secure a reproductive principle, what need of such *elegant complications*? Why so much art employed, and so many decorations added? Why should vestments be prepared, richer than brocades; more delicate than lawns; and of a finer glow, than the most admired velvets?—If the great mother had no other aim, than barely to accommodate her little offspring; warm flannel, or homely fustian, would have served her turn. Served it, full as well as the most sumptuous tissues, or all the furniture of the mercer's shop.

Evident then it is, that flowers were endued with such enchanting graces, for the *pleasure of man*. In pursuance of this original intention, they have always paid their court to the human race; they still seem particularly solicitous of recommending themselves to our regard. The finest of each species croud about our habitations; and are rarely to be seen, at a distance from our abodes. They *thrive* under our cultivating hand, and observing eye; but degenerate, and *pine away*, if unregarded by their lord.—To win his attention, and deck his retreats, they hide their deformities under ground; and display nothing but the most *graceful* forms, and *engaging* colours to his sight.—To merit a farther degree of his esteem, the generality of them dispense a delightful perfume. What is still more obliging, they † reserve their *richest* exhalations, to embalm his morning and

* "We find that the most important parts in the vegetable world, "are those which are the most beautiful. These are the seeds by "which the several races of plants are propagated and continued, "and which are always lodged in flowers or blossoms. Nature seems "to hide her principal design, and to be industrious in making the "earth gay and delightful, while she is carrying on her great work, "and intent upon her own preservation. *Spect.* Vol. V. No. 387.

† —— —— —— The flow'rs,
That open *now* their choicest bosom'd smells,
Reserv'd from night, and *kept for thee in store*. MILT.

evening walks*. Becauſe he uſually chooſes thoſe cool hours, to recreate himſelf among their blooming ranks; therefore, at thoſe hours, they are moſt laviſh of their fragrance, and breathe out their choiceſt ſpirits.

O man, greatly beloved by thy Creator! The darling of providence! Thou art diſtinguiſhed by *his goodneſs*; diſtinguiſh thyſelf alſo by *thy gratitude*. Be it thy one undivided aim, to glorify him; who has been at ſo much expence, to gratify thee!—While all theſe inferior creatures, in *ſilent* eloquence, declare the glory of GOD; do thou lend them thy *tongue*. Be thou the high-prieſt of the mute creation. Let their praiſes become vocal in thy ſongs.—Adore the ſupreme Benefactor, for the bleſſings he ſhowers down, upon every order of beings. Adore him for numberleſs mercies, which are appropriated to thyſelf. But, above all, adore him, for that noble gift of a *rational*, and *immortal* ſoul.—This conſtitutes us maſters of the globe, and gives us the real enjoyment of it's riches. This diſcovers ten thouſand beauties, which otherwiſe had been loſt; and renders them both a ſource of delight, and a nurſery of devotion.—By virtue of this exalted principle, we are qualified to admire our Maker's works, and capable of *bearing* his illuſtrious *image:* bearing his illuſtrious image, not only when theſe ornaments of the ground, have reſigned their honours; but, when the great origin of day, is extinguiſhed in the ſkies; and all the flaming orbs on high, are put out in obſcure darkneſs.—*Then* to ſurvive; to ſurvive the ruins of one world, and to enjoy GOD—to reſemble GOD—to be "filled with all the fulneſs of GOD," in another—What a happineſs, what an ineſtimable happineſs, is this! Yet, *this* is thy privilege, (barter it not, for trifles of an hour!) this thy glorious prerogative, O man!

O! the

* The twining jaſmine, and the bluſhing roſe,
With laviſh grace their *morning* ſcents diſcloſe;
The ſmelling tub'roſe and jonquil declare
The ſtronger impulſe of an *ev'ning* air, PRIOR's *Sol.*

O! the goodneſs, the *exuberant goodneſs*, of our GOD! I cannot forbear celebrating it once more, before I paſs to another conſideration.—How much ſhould we think ourſelves obliged, to a generous friend; who ſhould *build* a ſtately edifice *, purely for our abode! But, how greatly would the obligation be increaſed; if the hand that built, ſhould alſo *furniſh* it! And not only furniſh it, with all

* I cannot perſuade myſelf, that the compariſon is ſtretched beyond proper bounds, when carried to this pitch. It is my ſtedfaſt opinion, That the world, at leaſt this lower world, with it's various appurtenances, was intended *purely* for man; that it is *appropriated* to him; and that he (in ſubordination to GOD's glory) is the *end* of it's creation.—Other animals, 'tis true, partake of the Creator's benefits: but then, tney partake under the notion of man's domeſticks, or on the foot of retainers to him; as creatures, which bear ſome relation to his ſervice, and ſome way or other contribute to his good. So that ſtill he is the *centre* of the whole; or, as our incomparable *Milton*, equally maſter of poetry and divinity, expreſſes himſelf; *All things live for man. Par. Loſt*, B. XI. 161.

Mr. *Pope*, in his ethic epiſtles, is pleaſed to explode this tenet, as the height of *pride*, and a groſs *abſurdity*.—For my part, I ſee no reaſon for ſuch a charge. With all ſubmiſſion to ſo ſuperior a genius, it ſeems very remote from pride, to be duly ſenſible of favours vouchſafed: to contemplate them in all the extent of their munificence, and acknowledge them accordingly. I ſhould rather imagine, that to contract their ſize, when they are immenſely large; to ſtint their number, when they are altogether innumerable; that ſuch a procedure ſavours more of *inſenſibility*, than our hypotheſis of preſumption; and has more in it of *ingratitude*, than that of arrogance.

And how can it be deemed an abſurdity, to maintain that GOD gave us *a world*, for our poſſeſſion; when it is our duty to believe, that he gave us his *only Son*, for our propitiation? Sure, it can be neither difficult, nor extravagant to ſuppoſe, that he deſigned the habitable globe, with it's whole furniture, for our preſent uſe; ſince he with-held not his holy child JESUS, but freely delivered him up, for our final ſalvation.

Upon the whole; I cannot but conclude, That the attempt of our famous poet is neither *kind*, with regard to his fellow-creatures—nor *grateful*, with regard to his Creator—neither is his ſcheme, in fact, *true*. The attempt not *kind*, with regard to man; becauſe, it robs him of one of the moſt delightful and raviſhing contemplations imaginable. To conſider the great Author of exiſtence as having *me* in his eye, when he formed univerſal nature; as contriving all things, with an immediate view, to the exigencies of my particular ſtate; and making them all in ſuch a manner, as might be moſt conducive to my particular advantage; this muſt occaſion the ſtrongeſt ſatis-

that is commodious and comfortable; but *ornament* is alſo, with whatever is ſplendid and delightful! *This*, has our moſt indulgent Creator done; in a manner infinitely ſurpaſſing, all we could wiſh, or imagine.

The *earth* is aſſigned us for a dwelling.—The *ſkies* are ſtretched over us like a magnificent canopy, dyed in the pureſt azure; and beautified, now with pictures of floating ſilver, now with colourings of reflected crimſon.—The *graſs* is ſpread under us, as a ſpacious carpet; wove with ſilken threads of green, and damaſked with flowers of every hue.—The *ſun*, like a golden lamp, is hung out in the ethereal vault; and pours his effulgence, all the day, to lighten our paths.—When night approaches,

ſatisfactions, whenever I caſt a glance on the objects that ſurround me.—Not *grateful* with regard to GOD; becauſe it has the moſt direct tendency to diminiſh our ſenſe of his kindneſs, and by that means, to throw a damp upon our gratitude. It teaches us to look upon ourſelves, as almoſt loſt among a croud of other beings, or regarded only with an occaſional and incidental beneficence. Which muſt certainly weaken the diſpoſition, and indeed ſlacken the ties, to the moſt adoring thankfulneſs.—To which, I apprehend, we may juſtly add; Neither is the ſcheme, in fact, *true*. For, not to mention what might be urged from the ſure word of revelation, this one argument appears ſufficiently concluſive: The world began with man; the world muſt ceaſe with man; conſequently, the grand uſe, the principal end of the world, is, to ſubſerve the intereſt of man. It is on all ſides agreed, that the edifice was erected, when man was to be furniſhed with an habitation; and that it will be demoliſhed, when man has no farther need of it's accommodations. When he enters into the houſe not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, "the earth, and all the works that are therein, ſhall be burnt "up." From which it ſeems a very obvious and fair deduction, That man is the *final cauſe* of this inferior creation.

So that I think my readers and myſelf, *privileged* (not to ſay, on the principles of gratitude, *obliged*) to uſe thoſe lovely lines of our author, with a propriety and truth, equal to their elegance and beauty;

> For *me* kind nature wakes her genial pow'r,
> Suckles each herb, and ſpreads out ev'ry flow'r!
> Annual, for *me*, the grape, the roſe renew
> The juice nectareous, and the balmy dew;
> For *me*, the mine a thouſand treaſures brings;
> For *me*, health guſhes from a thouſand ſprings.
>
> *Eſſ. Ep.* I. ver. 139.

approaches, the *moon* takes up the friendly office; and the *ſtars* are kindled in twinkling myriads, to chear the darkneſs with their milder luſtre, not diſturb our repoſe by too intenſe a glare.—The *clouds*, beſides the rich paintings they hang around the heavens, act the part of a ſhifting ſcreen; and defend us, by their ſeaſonable interpoſition, from the ſcorching beams of ſummer. May we not alſo regard them, as the great watering-pots of the globe? which, wafted on the wings of the wind, diſpenſe their moiſture * evenly through the univerſal garden; and fructify, with their ſhowers, whatever our hand plants.—The *fields* are our exhauſtleſs granary.—The *ocean* is our vaſt reſervoir.—The *animals* ſpend their ſtrength, to diſpatch our buſineſs; reſign their cloathing, to repleniſh our wardrobe; and ſurrender their very lives, to provide for our tables.—In ſhort, every *element* is a ſtore-houſe of conveniencies; every *ſeaſon* brings us the choiceſt productions; all *nature* is our caterer.—And, which is a moſt endearing recommendation of theſe favours, they are all as lovely, as they are uſeful. You obſerve nothing mean or inelegant. All is clad in *beauty*'s faireſt robe, and regulated by *proportion*'s

* This circumſtance, amidſt abundance of other delicate and edifying remarks upon the wonders of nature, is finely touched in the *philoſophical tranſactions* recorded in the book of *Job*, chap. xxxviii. ver. 15.—*Tole leſhethep melen mi*—*Who hath divided a water-courſe for the overflowing of waters?*—The *Hebrew* is ſo pregnant and rich with ſenſe, that no *tranſlation* can do it juſtice. The following *paraphraſe*, perhaps, may repreſent the principal ideas comprehended in the expreſſive original.—Who has *branched out*, and with admirable judgment, *diſpoſed* a variety of *aqueducts*; for that immenſe collection of waters, which float in the ſky? Who *diſtributes* thoſe pendulous floods, through all the borders of the earth; Diſtributes them, not in dreadful cataracts, or *promiſcuous* gluts of rain; but in kindly drops, and refreſhing ſhowers; with as much *regularity* and *œconomy*, as if they were conveyed by *pipes* from a *conduit*?—To WHOM ſhall we aſcribe that niceneſs of contrivance, which now emits, now reſtrains them: ſometimes drives their humid train to one place, ſometimes to another: diſpenſes them to *this* ſoil in larger, to *that* in ſmaller communications: and, in a word, ſo manages the mighty fluid, that every ſpot is *ſupplied*, in exact proportion to it's wants; none *deſtroyed*, by an undiſtinguiſhing deluge?

tion's niceſt rule *. The whole ſcene exhibits, a fund of pleaſures to the imagination, at the ſame time, that it more than ſupplies all our wants †.

Therefore thou art *inexcuſable*, O man, whoſoever thou art, that *rebelleſt* againſt thy Maker. He ſurrounds thee, with unnumbered benefits; and follows thee, with an effuſion of the richeſt, nobleſt gifts. He courts thy affections; he ſolicits thy gratitude; by liberalities which are never intermitted, by a bounty which knows no limits.—Moſt bleſſed LORD, let this thy goodneſs, thy unwearied goodneſs, lead us to repentance. *Win* us to thyſelf, thou Fountain of felicity, by theſe ſweet inducements. *Draw* us to our duty, thou GOD of our ſalvation, by theſe "cords of love."

What a living picture is here, of the *beneficial* effects of *induſtry!* By induſtry and cultivation, this neat ſpot is an image of *Eden*. Here, is all that can entertain the eye, or ‡ regale the ſmell. Whereas, without cultivation, this ſweet garden had been a deſolate wilderneſs. Vile thiſtles had made it loathſome, and tangling briers inacceſſible. Without cultivation, it might have been a neſt for ſerpents, and the horrid haunt of venomous creatures. But, the ſpade and pruning-knife in the hand of induſtry, have improved it into a ſort of terreſtrial paradiſe.

How naturally does this lead our contemplation, to the advantages which flow from a virtuous *education*; and the miſeries which enſue from the § *neglect* of it!—The mind,

* Perhaps, it was from ſuch an obſervation, that the *Greeks*, thoſe critical and refined judges of things, expreſſed the *mundane ſyſtem* by a word, which ſignifies *beauty*—κοσμος.

† "Thoſe ſeveral living creatures, which are made for our ſervice or ſuſtenance, at the ſame time either fill the woods with their muſic, furniſh us with game, or raiſe pleaſing ideas in us by the delightfulneſs of their appearance. Fountains, lakes, and rivers, are as refreſhing to the imagination, as to the ſoil through which they paſs." *Spect.* Vol. V. No. 387.

‡ *Omnis copia narium.* HOR.

§ *Neglectis urenda ſilix innaſcitur agris.* HOR.

mind, without early inſtruction, will, in all probability, become like the "vineyard of the ſluggard." If left to the propenſities of it's own depraved will; what can we expect, but the moſt luxuriant growth of unruly appetites; which, in time, will break forth into all manner of ſcandalous irregularities? What?—but that *anger*, like a prickly thorn, arm the temper with an untractable moroſeneſs: *peeviſhneſs*, like a ſtinging nettle, render the converſation irkſome and forbidding: *avarice*, like ſome choaking weed, teach the fingers to gripe, and the hands to oppreſs: *revenge*, like ſome poiſonous plant, replete with baneful juices, rankle in the breaſt, and meditate miſchief to it's neighbour: while unbridled *luſts*, like ſwarms of noiſome inſects, taint each riſing thought; and render "every imagination of the heart, only evil "continually."—Such, are the uſual products of ſavage nature! Such, the furniture of the uncultivated ſoul!

Whereas, let the mind be put under the "nurture "and admonition of the LORD:" let holy diſcipline clear the ſoil: let ſacred inſtructions ſow it with the beſt ſeed: let ſkill and vigilance dreſs the riſing ſhoots; direct the young ideas, how to ſpread; the wayward paſſions, how to move.—Then, what a different ſtate of the inner man, will quickly take place! *Charity* will breathe her ſweets, and *hope* expand her bloſſoms: the *perſonal* virtues diſplay their graces, and the *ſocial* ones their fruits*: the ſentiments become generous! the carriage endearing; the life honourable and uſeful†.

O! that

* This transformation of the *heart*, and renewal of the *life*, are repreſented in ſcripture, by ſimilitudes very nearly allied to the images uſed above.—GOD, by his ſanctifying Spirit, *will make the ſoul as a watered garden.* Under the operation of this divine principle, *The deſart ſhall rejoice, and bloſſom as the roſe.* Where-ever it exerts the refining and ennobling energy, *Inſtead of the thorn, ſhall come up the fir-tree; and, inſtead of the brier, the myrtle-tree,* Jer. xxxi. 12. Iſa. xxxv. 1. lv. 13.

† —— *A teneris aſſueſcere multum eſt!* VIRG.

——— ου γαρ μικρον διαφερει, το εθος η εθως ενθυς εκ νεων εθιζεσθαι, αλλα πανυ πολυ, μαλλον δε το παν. ARISTOT. The prin-

O! that governors of *families*, and maſters of *ſchools*, would watch, with a conſcientious ſolicitude, over the morals of their tender charge! What pity it is, that the advancing generation ſhould loſe theſe invaluable endowments, through any ſupineneſs in their inſtructors! —See! with what aſſiduity, the *curious floriſt* attends his little nurſery! He viſits them early and late; furniſhes them with the propereſt mold; ſupplies them with ſeaſonable moiſture; guards them from the ravages of inſects; ſcreens them from the injuries of the weather; marks their ſpringing buds; obſerves them attentively, through their whole progreſs; and never intermits his anxiety, till he beholds them blown into full perfection.—And ſhall a range of *painted leaves*, which flouriſh to-day, and to-morrow fall to the ground —ſhall theſe be tended, with more zealous application, than the exalted faculties of an *immortal* ſoul!

Yet truſt not in cultivation *alone*. It is the bleſſing of the almighty huſbandman, which imparts *ſucceſs* to ſuch labours of love. If GOD "ſeal up the bottles of "heaven," and command the clouds to with-hold their fatneſs, the beſt manured plot becomes a barren deſart. And if HE reſtrain the dew of his heavenly benediction, all human endeavours miſcarry; the rational plantation languiſhes; our moſt pregnant hopes, from youths of the moſt promiſing genius, prove abortive. *Their root will be as rottenneſs, and their bloſſom will go up as duſt* *.—Therefore let *parents* plant; let *tutors* water; but let both look up to the Father of *Spirits*, for the deſired increaſe.

On

principles we imbibe, and the habits we contract, in our early years, are not matters of *ſmall moment*, but of the *utmoſt conſequence* imaginable. They not only give a tranſient or ſuperficial tincture, to our *firſt* appearance in life; but moſt commonly ſtamp the form, of our *whole* future conduct, and even of our *eternal* ſtate.

* Iſa. v. 24.

On every ſide, I eſpy ſeveral *budding* flowers. As yet, they are like bales of cloth from the packer's warehouſe. Each is wrapt within a ſtrong encloſure, and it's contents are tied together by the firmeſt bandages. So that all their beauties lie concealed, and all their ſweets are locked up. Juſt ſuch is the *niggardly* wretch; whoſe aims are all turned inward, and meanly terminated upon *himſelf*. Who makes his own private intereſts, or perſonal pleaſures, the ſole centre of his deſigns, and the ſcanty circumference of his actions.

Ere long, the ſearching beams will open theſe ſilken folds, and draw them into a graceful *expanſion*. Then, what a lovely bluſh will glow in their cheeks; and what a balmy odour exhale from their boſoms!—So, when divine grace ſhines upon the mind, even the *churl becomes bountiful*. The heart of ſtone is taken away; and a heart of fleſh, a heart ſuſceptible of the ſofteſt, moſt compaſſionate emotions, is introduced in it's ſtead. O! how ſweetly do the ſocial affections dilate themſelves, under ſo benign an influence! Juſt like theſe diſcloſing gems, under the powerful eye of day. The tender regards, are no longer *confined* to a ſingle object; but *extend* themſelves into a generous concern for mankind, and ſhed liberal refreſhments on all within their reach*.

Ariſe then, thou Sun of righteouſneſs; ariſe, with healing under thy wings; and transfuſe thy gentle, but pene-

* The prophet, deſcribing the *charitable* temper, very beautifully ſays; *If thou draw out thy ſoul to the hungry!* — This, I think, may not improperly be illuſtrated by the circumſtances obſerved above. The opening of thoſe buds into a large and extenſive ſpread, is a pretty pourtrait of the *amplitude* of a *generous* heart; which cannot ſhut up it's compaſſion, or remain unconcerned at any human calamity. The freeneſs and copiouſneſs, with which the expanded flowers are continually pouring out their choiceſt eſſences, may repreſent the various acts of an unwearied liberality; together with thoſe endearing words, and that cordial affection, which *embalm*, as it were, a gift; double it's value; and conſtitute what the ſacred penman ſtyles, *Drawing out the ſoul.* — *Nepſhi epik*—*Deprompſeris animam tuam.* Iſa. lviii. 10.

penetrating ray, through all our intellectual powers. Inlarge every *narrow* diſpoſition, and fill us with a *diffuſive* benevolence. Make room in our breaſts, for the whole human race; and teach us to love all our fellow-creatures, for their amiable Creator's ſake. May we be pleaſed with their excellencies, and rejoice in their happineſs; but feel their miſeries as our own, and, with a brother's ſympathy, haſten to relieve them!

Diſpoſed at proper diſtances, I obſerve a range of ſtrong and *ſtately ſtalks*. They ſtand like towers, along the walls of a fortified city; or riſe like lofty ſpires, amidſt the group of houſes. They part, at the top, into ſeveral penſile ſpiky pods. From each of which, we ſhall ſoon ſee a fine figure diſplaying itſelf: *rounded* into a form, which conſtitutes a perfect circle; *ſpread* wide open, into the moſt frank and communicative air; and tinged with the colour, which is ſo peculiarly captivating to the miſer's eye.

But the property I chiefly admire, is it's paſſionate *fondneſs* for the *ſun*. When the evening ſhades take place, the poor flower droops, and folds up it's leaves. It mourns all the long night, and pines amidſt the gloom, like ſome forlorn lover, baniſhed from the object of his affections. No ſooner does providence open "the eye-"lids of the morning," but it meets * and welcomes the returning light; courts and careſſes it, all the day; nor ever loſes ſight of the refulgent charmer, ſo long as he continues above the horizon!—In the morning, you may perceive it, preſenting a golden boſom to the eaſt; at noon, it points upward, to the middle ſky; in the evening, follows the ſame attractive influence to the weſt.

Surely, nature is a book, and every page rich with ſacred hints. To an attentive mind, the *garden* turns *preacher*; and it's blooming tenants, are ſo many lively ſermons.

* ——— *Illa ſuum, quamvis radice tenetur,*
Vertitur ad ſolem.——— OVID.

ſermons. What an engaging pattern, and what an excellent leſſon, have we here!—*So*, let the redeemed of the LORD *look unto* JESUS*, and be conformed to their beloved. Let us all be *heliotropes* (if I may uſe the expreſſion) to the *Sun of righteouſneſs*. Let our paſſions riſe and fall; take this courſe or that; as his word determines, as his holy example guides. Let us be ſo accommodated both to his commanding and providential will, as the wax is turned to the imprinted ſeal; or, as the aſpect of this enamoured flower, to the ſplendid ſtar, which creates our day.

In every *enjoyment*, O thou watchful chriſtian, look unto JESUS; receive it as proceeding from his love, and purchaſed by his agonies†.—In every *tribulation* look unto JESUS; mark his gracious hand, managing the ſcourge or mingling the bitter cup; attempering it to a proper degree of ſeverity; adjuſting the time of it's continuance; and ready to make theſe ſeeming diſaſters productive of real good.—In every infirmity and *failing*, look unto JESUS, thy merciful high-prieſt; pleading his atoning blood, and making interceſſion for tranſgreſſors.—In every *prayer* look unto JESUS, thy prevailing advocate; recommending thy devotions, and "bearing the iniquity of thy holy things‡:"—In every *temptation* look unto JESUS, the author of thy ſtrength, and Captain of thy ſalvation; who alone is able to lift up the hands which hang down, to invigorate the enfeebled knees, and make thee more than conqueror over all thy enemies.—But eſpecially, when the *hour* of thy *departure* approaches; when "thy fleſh and thy heart "fail;" when all the ſprings of life are irreparably breaking;

* Heb. xii. 2.

† He ſunk beneath our heavy woes,
To raiſe us to his throne:
There's not a gift his hand beſtows,
But coſt his heart a groan. WATTS.

‡ Exod. xxviii. 38.

breaking; *then* look unto JESUS with a believing eye*. Like expiring *Stephen*, behold him ſtanding at the right-hand of GOD, on purpoſe to ſuccour his people, in this their laſt extremity. Yes, my chriſtian friend; when thy journey through life is finiſhed, and thou art arrived on the very verge of mortality; when thou art juſt launching out into the inviſible world, and all before thee is vaſt eternity; then, O then, be ſure to look ſtedfaſtly unto JESUS! "See by faith the LORD'S CHRIST." View him, as the only *way* †, to the everlaſting manſions; as the only *door* ‡, to the abodes of bliſs.

Yonder tree, which faces the ſouth, has ſomething too remarkable to paſs without obſervation.—Like the fruitful, though feeble vine, ſhe brings forth a large family of branches: but, unable to ſupport them herſelf, commits them to the tuition of a ſunny wall. As yet, the tender twigs have ſcarce gemmed their future bloſſoms. However, I may anticipate the well-known productions; and picture to myſelf the *paſſion-flower*. Which will, in due time, with a long and copious ſucceſſion, adorn the boughs.

I have read, in a *latin* author, of flowers inſcribed with the names of kings §: but here is one, emblazoned with the marks of the bleeding Prince of Life. I read, in the inſpired writings, of apoſtolic men; who bore about in their bodies, the dying of the LORD JESUS ‖: but here is a *blooming religioſo*, that carries apparent memorials of the ſame tremendous and fatal cataſtrophe.—Who would have expected to find ſuch a tragedy of woe, exhibited in a collection of the moſt delicate delights?—Or to ſee *Calvary*'s horrid ſcene, pourtrayed on the ſofteſt ornaments of the garden?—In nature

* *Look unto ME, and be ye ſaved, all the ends of the earth.* Iſa. xlv. 22.

† John xiv. 6. ‡ John x. 9.

§ *Dic, quibus in terris inſcripti nomina regum*
Naſcantur flores?— VIRG.

‖ 2 Cor. iv. 10.

nature then actuated by the noble ambition, of paying *commemorative* honours to her agonizing Sovereign? Is ſhe kindly officious to *remind* forgetful mortals, of that miracle of mercy; which it is their duty to contemplate, and their happineſs to believe?—Or, is a *ſportive* imagination my interpreter; and all the ſuppoſed reſemblance, no more than the precarious gloſs of fancy? Be it ſo; yet even fancy has her merit, when ſhe ſets forth, in ſuch pleaſing imagery, the crucified JESUS. Nor ſhall I refuſe a willing regard, to imagination herſelf; when ſhe employs her creative powers, to revive the ſenſe of ſuch unparalleled love, and prompt my gratitude to ſo divine a friend.

That *ſpiral tendril*, ariſing from the bottom of the ſtalk; is it a repreſentation of the *ſcourge*, which laſhed the Redeemer's unſpotted fleſh; and inflicted thoſe ſtripes, by which our ſouls are healed? Or, is it twiſted for the *cord*, which bound his hands in painful and ignominious confinement: thoſe beneficent hands, which were inceſſantly ſtretched out to unlooſe the heavy burdens, and to impart bleſſings of every choice kind?—Behold the *nails*, which were drenched in his ſacred veins, and riveted his feet to the accurſed tree: thoſe beautiful* feet, which always went about doing good; and travelled far and near, to ſpread the glad tidings of everlaſting ſalvation.—See the *hammer*, ponderous and maſſy, which drove the rugged irons through the ſhivering nerves; and forced a paſſage for thoſe dreadful wedges, between the diſlocated bones.—View the *thorns*, which incircled our royal Maſter's brow, and ſhot their keen afflictive points into his bleſſed head. O the ſmart! the racking ſmart! when, inſtead of the triumphal laurel, or the odoriferous garland, that pungent and ragged wreath, was planted on the meek Meſſiah's

* *How beautiful are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publiſheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publiſheth ſalvation!* Iſa. lii. 7.

forehead! When violent and barbarous blows of the ſtrong eaſtern cane*, ſtruck the prickly crown, and fixed every thorn deep in his throbbing temples †!—There ſtand the *diſciples*, ranged in the green impalement; and forming a circle, round the inſtruments of their great Commander's death. They appear like ſo many faithful adherents, who breathe a gallant reſolution, either of defending their LORD to the laſt extremity, or of dropping honourably by his ſide. But did they give ſuch proofs of zeal and fidelity in their conduct, as their ſteady poſture, and determined aſpect, ſeem to promiſe? Alas! what is all human firmneſs, when deſtitute of ſuccours from above, but an expiring *vapour*? What is every ſaint, if unſupported by powerful grace, but an abandoned *traitor*?—Obſerve the *glory*, delineated in double rays, grand with imperial purple, and rich with ethereal blue. But ah! how incapable are threads, tho' ſpun by ſummer's fineſt hand; though dyed in ſnows, or dipped in heaven; to diſplay the immaculate excellency of his human, or the ineffable majeſty of his divine nature! Compared with theſe ſublime perfections, the moſt *vivid* aſſemblage of colours, fades into an *unmeaning*

* *They took the reed*, ſays the ſacred hiſtorian, *and ſmote him on the head*; "and ſo, as it were, nailed down the thorns into his fore-"head and temples, and occaſioned thereby exquiſite pain, as well as "a great effuſion of blood." *Family Expoſitor*, Vol. II. ſect. 188.—"It is moſt probable, *adds the ſame judicious critic*, this was a walk-"ing-ſtaff, which they put into his hand as a ſceptre; for a blow "with a *ſlight reed* would ſcarce have been felt, or have deſerved a "mention in a detail of ſuch dreadful ſufferings."

† The ſmart, attending this unparalleled piece of contempt and barbarity, muſt be *inexpreſſibly ſevere*: not only, on account of the many painful punctures made in the fleſh; but principally, becauſe the *periœſteum*, an exquiſitely ſenſible tegument of the bones; lying, in thoſe parts, very near the external ſkin, muſt receive a *multitude* of terrible wounds. The anguiſh of which, could not fail of being inflamed to an exceſs of rage, by the *continuance* of ſo many thorny lancets, in that extremely tender membrane; which, in ſuch a caſe,

—trembling alive all o'er,
Muſt ſmart and agonize at ev'ry pore.

meaning flatneſs; the moſt charming effects of light and ſhade, are not only mere daublings, but an abſolute blank.

Among all the beauties, which ſhine in ſunny robes, and ſip the ſilver dews; this, I think, has the *nobleſt import*, if not the *fineſt preſence*. Were they all to paſs in review, and expect the award of ſuperiority from my deciſion; I ſhould not heſitate a moment. Be the prize aſſigned to this amiable candidate; which has ſo eminently diſtinguiſhed, and ſo highly dignified herſelf, by bearing ſuch a remarkable reſemblance to "the righ-"teous Branch; the Plant of renown*." While others appoint it a place in the parterre; I would tranſplant the paſſion-flower, or rather transfer it's ſacred ſignificancy, to my heart. *There* let it bloom, both in ſummer and in winter; bloom, in the moſt impreſſive characters, and with an undecaying luſtre. That I may alſo wear—wear on my very ſoul, the traces of IMMANUEL; pierced for my ſins, and bruiſed for my tranſgreſſions. That I alſo may *be crucified with* CHRIST †; at leaſt in penitential remorſe, and affectionate ſympathy. That I may *know the fellowſhip of his ſufferings* ‡; and feel all my evil affections, wounded by his agonies, mortified by his death.

There is another ſubject of the verdant kingdom, which, on account of it's very uncommon qualities, demands my particular notice. One, ſo extremely diffident in her diſpoſition, and delicate in her conſtitution; that ſhe dares not venture herſelf abroad in the open air: but is nurſed up in the warmth of a *hot-bed*, and lives cloiſtered in the cells of a *green-houſe*. But, the moſt curious peculiarity is, that, of all her kindred ſpecies, ſhe alone partakes of *perceptive* life; at leaſt advances neareſt to this moſt exalted ſtate of being; and may be looked upon as the link, which connects the animal and

* So the bleſſed JESUS is deſcribed, *Jer.* xxiii. 5. *Ezek.*. xxxiv. 9.

† Gal. ii. 20. ‡ Phil. iii. 10.

the vegetable world. A ſtranger, obſerving her motions, would almoſt be induced to ſuſpect, that ſhe is endued with ſome inferior degrees of conſciouſneſs and caution. For, if you offer to handle this *ſenſitive-plant*, ſhe immediately takes an alarm; haſtily contracts her fibres; and, like a perſon under apprehenſions of violence, *withdraws* from your finger, in a kind of precipitate *diſorder*. Perhaps the beauty of her aſpect might be ſullied, or the niceneſs of her texture diſcompoſed, by the human touch. Therefore, like a coy virgin, ſhe recedes from all becoming familiarities; and will admit no ſuch improper, if not pernicious freedoms.

Whatever be the cauſe of this unuſual effect; it ſuggeſts an inſtructive admonition to the chriſtian. *Such* ſhould be our apprehenſive timorous care, with regard to ſin; and all, even the moſt diſtant, approaches of vice. *So* ſhould we avoid the very appearance of evil, and ſtand aloof from every occaſion of falling.—If ſinners entice; if forbidden pleaſures tempt; or if opportunity beckon, with the gain of injuſtice in her hand: O! turn from the gilded ſnare; touch not the beauteous bane; but fly, fly with haſte, fly without any delay, from the bewitching ruin.—Does *anger* draw near with her lighted torch, to kindle the flame of reſentment in our breaſts? Does *flattery* ply our ears, with her enchanting and intoxicating whiſpers? Would *diſcontent* lay her leaden hand upon our temper, and mould into our minds her ſour leven; in order to make us a burden to ourſelves, and unamiable to others? Inſtantly let us divert our attention from the dangerous objects; and not ſo much endeavour to *antidote*, as to *ſhun*, the moral contagion. Let us revolve in our meditations, that wonderful *meekneſs* of our diſtreſſed Maſter; which, amidſt the moſt abuſive and provoking inſults, maintained an uniform tenour of unſhaken ſerenity. Let us contemplate that prodigious *humiliation*; which brought him, from

an

an infinite height above all worlds, to make his bed in the duſt of death. Let us ſooth our jarring, our uneaſy paſſions, with the remembrance of that *chearfulneſs* and *reſignation*; which rendered him, in the deepeſt poverty, unfeignedly thankful; and under the heavieſt tribulations, moſt ſubmiſſively patient.

Harbour not, on any conſideration, the betrayer of your virtue. Be deaf, inflexibly deaf, to every beguiling ſolicitation. If it obtrude into the unguarded heart; give it entertainment, no, not for a moment. To parley with the enemy, is to open a door for deſtruction. Our ſafety conſiſts in flight: and, in this caſe, *ſuſpicion* is the trueſt *prudence*; *fear*, the greateſt *bravery*.—Play not on the brink of the precipice. Flutter not round the edges of the flame. Dally not with the ſtings of death. But reject, with a becoming mixture of ſolicitude and abhorrence, the very firſt inſinuations of iniquity: as cautiouſly, as the *ſmarting ſore* ſhrinks even from the ſofteſt hand; as conſtantly, as this *jealous plant* recoils at the approaching touch*.

* The prophet *Iſaiah*, in an elegant and lively deſcription of *the upright man*, ſays, *He ſhaketh his hands from holding of bribes*; and, I may add, from practiſing any kind of iniquity. The image, exceedingly beautiful, and equally expreſſive, both illuſtrates and enforces the doctrine of this whole ſection.—*Shaketh his hands*; juſt as a perſon would do, who happens to have *burning coals* fall into his lap, or ſome *venomous creature* faſtening upon his fleſh. In ſuch a caſe, none would ſtand a moment to conſider, or to debate with himſelf the expediency of the thing. He would inſtantly fling off the pernicious incumbrance; inſtantly endeavour to diſengage himſelf, from the clinging miſchief.—*Iſa.* xxxiii. 15.

I have repreſented the danger, of not extinguiſhing immediately the *very firſt* ſparks of temptation, in a variety of views. Becauſe, a proper behaviour, in this conjuncture, is of ſuch vaſt importance to the purity, the ſafety, and the comfort of our minds.—Becauſe, I had the *royal moraliſt* in my eye; who, deterring his pupils from the path of the wicked, cries; with an air of deep concern, and in the language of vehement importunity; cries, *Avoid it*; *paſs not by it*; *turn from it*; *and paſs away*. How ſtrongly is the counſel urged, by being ſo *frequently* repeated; in ſuch a remarkable *diverſity* of conciſe and abrupt, conſequently forcible and preſſing admonitions! *Prov.* iv. 15.

Not long ago, theſe curious productions of the ſpring, were *coarſe* and miſ-ſhapen roots. Had we opened the earth, and beheld them in their ſeed, how uncouth and contemptible had their appearance been!—But now, they are the boaſt of nature; the delight of the ſons of men; finiſhed patterns for enamelling and embroidery; outſhining even the happieſt ſtrokes of the pencil. They are taught to bloom, but with a very inferior luſtre*, in the richeſt tapeſtries, and moſt magnificent ſilks. Art never attempts to *equal* their incomparable elegancies; but places all her merit, in *copying* after theſe delicate originals. Even thoſe, who glitter in ſilver, or whoſe cloathing is of wrought gold; are deſirous to borrow additional ornaments, from a ſprig of jeſſamine, or a little aſſemblage of pinks.

What a fine idea may we form, from hence, of the *reſurrection* of the *juſt*, and the ſtate of their re-animated bodies! As the roots even of our choiceſt flowers, when depoſited in the ground, are rude and ungraceful; but, when they ſpring up into blooming life, are moſt elegant and ſplendid; ſo, the fleſh of a ſaint, when committed to the duſt, alas! what is it? A heap of corruption; a maſs of putreſying clay. But, when it obeys the great archangel's call, and ſtarts into a new exiſtence; what an aſtoniſhing change enſues! What a moſt ennobling improvement takes place!—That which was ſown in *weakneſs*, is raiſed in all the vivacity of *power*. That which was ſown in *deformity*, is raiſed in the bloom of celeſtial *beauty*. Exalted, refined, and glorified, it will ſhine "as the brightneſs of the firmament," when it darts the inimitable blue, through the fleeces—the ſnowy fleeces of ſome cleaving cloud.

Fear

* The cowſlip ſmiles in *brighter yellow* dreſt,
Than that which veils the nubile virgin's breaſt:
A *fairer red* ſtands bluſhing in the roſe,
Than that which on the bridegroom's veſtments flows.

PRIOR's Sol.

Fear not, then, thou faithful chriſtian; fear not, at the appointed time, to deſcend into the tomb. Thy *ſoul* thou mayſt truſt with thy omnipotent Redeemer, who is LORD of the unſeen world; "who has the keys "of hell, and of death." Moſt ſafely mayſt thou truſt thy better part, in thoſe beneficent hands, which were pierced with nails, and faſtened to the ignominious tree, for thy ſalvation.—With regard to thy *earthly tabernacle*, be not diſmayed. It is taken down, only to be rebuilt upon a diviner plan, and in a more heavenly form. If it retires into the ſhadow of death, and lies immured in the gloom of the grave; it is only to return, from a ſhort confinement, to endleſs liberty. If it falls into diſſolution, it is in order to riſe more illuſtrious from it's ruins; and wear an infinitely brighter face of perfection, and of glory.

Having, now, made my *panegyric*; let me, next, take up a *lamentation*, for theſe lovelieſt productions of the vegetable world.—For, I foreſee their approaching doom. Yet a little while, and all theſe pleaſing ſcenes vaniſh. Yet a little while, and all the ſweets of the breathing, all the beauties of the blooming ſpring, are no more. Every one of theſe amiable forms, muſt be ſhriveled to deformity, and trodden to the earth.—Significant reſemblance this, of all created beauty. *All fleſh is graſs*; like the green herbage, liable and prone to fade. Nay, *all the goodlineſs thereof*, it's fineſt accompliſhments and what the world generally admires, *is as the flower of the field** ; which loſes it's gloſs, decays and periſhes, more ſpeedily than the graſs itſelf.—Behold then, ye brighteſt among the daughters of *Eve*; behold yourſelves, in this glaſs. See the charms of your *perſon* eclipſed, by the luſtre of theſe little flowers; and the frailty of your *ſtate* repreſented †, by their tranſient glories. A fever may

* Iſa. xl. 6.

† Και το ροδον καλον εστι, και ο χρονος αυτο μαραινει·
Και το ιον καλον εστιν εν ειαρι, και ταχυ ωχεται·

Λευκοϊ

may ſcorch thoſe poliſhed veins; a conſumption may emaciate the dimpling cheeks; and a load of unexpected ſorrows, depreſs thoſe lively ſpirits. Or ſhould theſe diſaſters, in pity, ſpare the tender frame; yet age, inexorable age and wrinkles, will aſſuredly come at laſt; will wither all the fine features, and blaſt every ſprightly grace.

Then, ye *fair*, when thoſe ſparkling eyes are darkened, and ſink in their orbs; when they are rolling in agonies, or ſwimming in death; how will you ſuſtain the affic-

Λευκον το χιονον εϛι, μαραινεϊαι ανικα πιπλῃ·
Α δε χιων λευκυ, και ταχεϊαι ανικα ϖαχθη.
Και καλλος καλον εϛι το ϖαιδικον, αλλ αλιϛον ζῃ.

The reader will excuſe me, if I *imitate*, rather than *tranſlate*, theſe lines from *Theocritus*. If I vary one image, add another, and give a new turn to the whole.

When ſnows deſcend, and robe the fields
In *winter*'s bright array;
Touch'd by the ſun, the luſtre fades,
And weeps itſelf away.

When *ſpring* appears; when violets blow,
And ſhed a rich perfume;
How ſoon the fragrance breathes it's laſt!
How ſhort-liv'd is the bloom!

Freſh in the morn, the *ſummer* roſe
Hangs withering ere 'tis noon;
We ſcarce enjoy the balmy gift,
But mourn the pleaſure gone.

With gliding fire, an evening ſtar
Streaks the *autumnal* ſkies;
Shook from the ſphere, it darts away,
And, in an inſtant, dies.

Such are the charms, that fluſh the cheek,
And ſparkle in the eye:
So, from the lovely finiſh'd form
The tranſient graces fly.

To this the *ſeaſons*, as they roll,
Their atteſtation bring:
They warn the fair; their ev'ry round
Confirms the truth I ſing.

affliction? How will you repair the loſs?—Apply your thoughts to *religion*. Attend to the *one thing needful*. Believe in, and imitate the bleſſed JESUS. Then ſhall your ſouls mount up to the realms of happineſs; when the well proportioned clay, is mingling with it's mean original. The light of GOD's countenance will irradiate, with matchleſs and conſummate perfection, all their exalted faculties. Cleanſed intirely from every dreg of corruption, like ſome unſullied mirror, they will reflect the complete image of their Creator's holineſs.—O! that you would thus *dreſs* your *minds*, and prepare for the immortal ſtate! Then, from ſhining among your fellow-creatures on earth; you ſhall be tranſlated, to ſhine around the throne of GOD. Then, from being the ſweeteners of our life, and the delight of our eyes, here below; you ſhall paſs, by an eaſy tranſition, into angels of light; and become "an everlaſting excellency, the "joy of all generations."

Yes; *ye flowery nations, ye muſt all decay*.—Yonder *lily*, that looks like the queen of the gay creation—See, how gracefully it erects it's majeſtic head! What an air of dignity and grandeur ennobles it's aſpect! For elevated mien, as well as for incomparable luſtre, juſtly may it be preferred to the magnificent monarch of the eaſt*. But, all ſtately and charming as it is, it will hardly ſurvive a few more days. That unſpotted whiteneſs, muſt quickly be tarniſhed; and the ſnowy form, defiled in the duſt.

As the *lily* pleaſes, with the noble ſimplicity of it's appearance; the *tulip* is admired for the gaiety and multiplicity of it's colours. Never was cup, either painted, or enamelled with ſuch a profuſion of dyes. It's tinges are ſo glowing; it's contraſts ſo ſtrong; and the arrangement of them both, ſo elegant and artful! —'Twas lately the pride of the border, and the reigning

* Matt. vi. 29.

ing beauty of the delightful ſeaſon. As exquiſitely fine as the rainbow, and almoſt as extremely tranſient. It ſpread, for a little moment, it's glittering plumage; but has, now, laid all it's variegated and ſuperior honours down. Thoſe radiant ſtripes are blended, alas! rudely blended with common mold.

To a graceful ſhape, and blooming complexion, the *roſe* adds the moſt agreeable perfume. Our noſtrils make it repeated viſits, and are never weary of drinking in it's ſweets. A fragrance, ſo peculiarly rich and reviving, tranſpires from it's opening tufts; that every one covets it's acquaintance. How have I ſeen even the accompliſhed *Chariſſa*, for whom ſo many votaries languiſh, fondly careſſing this little flower! That lovely boſom, which is the ſeat of innocence and virtue; whoſe leaſt excellency it is, to rival the delicacy of the pureſt ſnows; among a thouſand charms of it's own, thinks it poſſible to adopt another from the damaſk roſe-bud. —Yet, even this univerſal favourite muſt fail. It's native balm cannot preſerve it from putrefaction. Soon, ſoon, muſt it reſign all thoſe endearing qualities; and hang neglected on it's ſtem, or drop deſpiſed to the ground.

One could wiſh, methinks, theſe moſt amiable of the inanimate race, a longer exiſtence: but in vain. They *fade*, almoſt as ſoon as they *flouriſh*. Within leſs than a month, their glories are extinct. Let the ſun take a few more journeys through the ſky; then viſit this inchanting walk; and you will find nothing, but a wretched wilderneſs of ragged or naked ſtalks.—But (my ſoul exults in the thought) the *garment* of celeſtial *glory*, which ſhall ere long array the re-animated body, will never wax old. The illuſtrious *robes* of a Saviour's conſummate *righteouſneſs*, which even now adorn the juſtified ſpirit, are incorruptible and immortal. No moth can corrode their texture; no number of ages ſully their brightneſs. The light of day may be quenched, and

all the ſtars ſink in obſcurity; but, the honours of "juſt "men made perfect," are ſubject to no diminution. Inextinguiſhable and unfading, is the luſtre of their crown.

Yes; ye flowery nations, ye muſt all decay.—Winter, like ſome enraged and irreſiſtible conqueror, that carries fire and ſword, where-ever he advances: that demoliſhes towns; depopulates countries; ſpreads ſlaughter and deſolation, on every ſide—So, juſt ſo, will *winter*, with his ſavage and unrelenting blaſts, invade this beautiful proſpect. The ſtorms are gathering, and the tempeſts muſtering their rage, to fall upon the vegetable kingdoms. They will ravage through the dominions of nature; and plunder her *riches*, and lay waſte her *charms*. Then, ye trees, muſt ye ſtand ſtript of your verdant apparel; and, ye fields, be ſpoiled of your waving treaſures. Then, the earth, diſrobed of all her gay attire, muſt ſit in ſables, like a diſconſolate widow. The ſun too, who now rides in triumph round the world, and ſcatters gaiety from his radiant eye, will then look faintly from the windows of the ſouth; and, caſting a ſhort glance on our dejected world, will leave us to the uncomfortable gloom of tedious nights.—Then, theſe pretty *choriſters* of the *air*, will chant no more to the gentle gales. The lark, the linnet, and all the feathered ſongſters, abandon their notes, and indulge their woes. The harmony of the woods is at an end; and ſilence (unleſs it be interrupted by howling winds) a ſullen ſilence ſits brooding upon the boughs; which are now made vocal, by a thouſand warbling throats.

But (ſweet recollection! raviſhing expectation!) the *ſongs* of *ſaints* in light, never admit a pauſe for ſadneſs. All heaven will reſound with the melody of their gratitude; and all eternity echo to their triumphant acclamations. The *hallelujahs* of that world; and the harmonious joy of it's inhabitants; will be as laſting as the

divine

divine perfections, they celebrate.—Come then, holy love, and *tune* my *heart*; deſcend, celeſtial fire, and *touch* my *tongue*; that I may ſtand ready to ſtrike up, and bear my part, in that great hoſanna, that everlaſting hymn.

Yes; *yes*; *ye flowery nations, ye muſt all decay.*—And, indeed, could you add the ſtrength of an oak, or the ſtability of a pyramid*, to all the delicacy of your texture; yet ſhort, exceeding ſhort, even then, would your duration be. For *I ſee, that all things come to an end.* The pillars of nature are tottering. The foundations of the round world are falling away. "The "heavens themſelves wax old like a garment."—But, amidſt theſe views of general ruin, here is our refuge; this is our conſolation; *we know, that our Redeemer liveth.* Thy years, bleſſed JESUS, ſhall not fail. From everlaſting to everlaſting, thou art ſtill the ſame: the ſame moſt excellent and adorable perſon; the ſame omnipotent and faithful friend; the ſame all-ſufficient and ineſtimable portion. O! may we but partake of thy merits; be ſanctified by thy grace; and received into thy glory!—Then periſh, if ye will, all inferior delights. Let all that is *ſplendid* in the ſkies, expire; and all that is

* I know not any performance, in which the *tranſitory* nature, of theſe moſt *durable* monuments of human grandeur, is hinted with ſuch a modeſt air of inſtruction; or their hideous ruin deſcribed, in ſuch a pomp of pleaſing horror; as in a ſmall, but ſolemn, picturesque, and majeſtic poem, intitled—THE RUINS OF ROME, written by the Rev. Mr. DYER. Whom the reader (if he has the pleaſure of peruſing that beautiful piece) will eaſily perceive, to have taken his draughts from the *originals* themſelves; as nothing but the *ſight* of thoſe magnificent remains, could have inſpired his lines with ſuch vivacity.—As a ſpecimen of the work, and a confirmation of the remark ſuggeſted above, I take leave to tranſcribe the following paſſage:

— — — The pilgrim oft,
At dead of night, mid his oraiſon hears
Aghaſt the voice of time, diſparting tow'rs,
Tumbling all precipitate down daſhed,
Rattling around, loud thund'ring to the moon.

is *amiable* in nature, be expunged. Let the whole extent of creation, be turned again into one undiſtinguiſhable void; one univerſal blank.—Yet, if GOD be ours, we ſhall have *enough*. If GOD be ours, we ſhall have *all*, and abound *. All that our circumſtances can want, or our wiſhes crave, to make us inconceivably bleſſed and happy. Bleſſed and happy, not only through this little interval of time, but through the unmeaſurable revolutions of eternity.

The *ſun* is, now, come forth in his ſtrength; and beats fiercely, upon my throbbing pulſe.—Let me retire to yonder inviting *arbour*. There, the woodbines retain the lucid drop; there, the jeſſamines, which line the verdant alcove, are ſtill impearled, and deliciouſly wet with dews.—Welcome, ye *refreſhing ſhades!* I feel, I feel, your chearing influence. My languid ſpirits revive; the ſlackened ſinews are new ſtrung; and life bounds briſker, through all her crimſon channels.

Reclined on this moſſy couch; and ſurrounded by this fragrant coldneſs; let me renew my aſpirations, to the ever-preſent Deity. Here, let me remember, and imitate, the pious *Auguſtine*, and his mother *Monica*. Who, being engaged in diſcourſe on the beauties of the viſible creation; roſe, by theſe ladders, to the glories of the inviſible ſtate. Till they were inſpired with the moſt *affecting ſenſe*, of their ſuper-eminent excellency; and actuated with the moſt *ardent breathings*, after their full enjoyment. Inſomuch, that they were almoſt wrapt up into the bliſs, they contemplated; and ſcarce "knew, "whether they were in the body, or out of the body."

When *tempeſts* toſs the ocean; when plaintive ſignals of diſtreſs, are heard from the bellowing deep; and melancholy tokens of ſhipwreck, come floating on the foaming ſurge; then, how delightful to ſtand ſafe on

O ſhore,

* His hand the good man faſtens on the ſkies,
And bids earth roll, nor feels the idle whirl.
Night-Thoughts, No. IV.

ſhore, and hug one's ſelf in conſcious ſecurity *.—When a *glut* of *waters*, burſts from ſome mighty torrent; ruſhes headlong over all the neighbouring plains; ſweeps away the helpleſs cattle; and drives the affrighted ſhepherd from his hut: then, from the top of a diſtant eminence, to deſcry the danger, we need not fear; how pleaſing!—Such, methinks, is my *preſent ſituation*.—For, now, the ſun blazes from on high: the air glows with his fire: the fields are rent with chinks: the roads are ſcorched to duſt: the woods ſeem to contract a ſickly aſpect, and a ruſſet hue: the traveller, broiled as he rides, haſtens to his inn, and intermits his journey: the labourer, bathed in ſweat, drops the ſcythe, and deſiſts from his work: the cattle flee to ſome ſhady covert, or elſe pant and toſs under the burning noon. Even the ſtubborn rock, ſmit with the piercing beams, is ready to cleave. All things *languiſh*, beneath the dazzling deluge—while I ſhall enjoy a *cool* hour, and *calm* reflection; amidſt the gloom of this bowery receſs, which ſcarce admits one ſpeck of ſunſhine.

Thus, may both the flock, and their ſhepherd, *dwell beneath the defence of the Moſt High, and abide under the ſhadow of the Almighty* †. Then, though ‡ the *peſtilence* walketh in darkneſs, and the *ſickneſs* deſtroyeth at noon-day; though thouſands fall beſide us, and ten thouſands at our right-hand; we need fear no evil. Either the deſtroying angel ſhall paſs over our houſes; or elſe he ſhall diſpenſe the corrections of a friend, not the ſcourges of an enemy; which, inſtead of hurting us, ſhall work

* As *Lucretius* gave the hint for theſe obſervations; ſo he aſſigns the reaſon of the pleaſure ſpecified. It ariſes, not from the conſideration of *another's miſery*; this would argue the rankeſt malevolence: but from the agreeable contemplation of our *own* perſonal *ſafety*. Which, while we view circumſtances, that are pernicious to others, but harmleſs to ourſelves, is not a little heightened by the contraſt. *Suave Mari magno*, &c.

† Pſalm xci. 1.

‡ This was written, when a very infectious and mortal diſtemper raged in the neighbourhood.

work for our good.—Then, though *profaneneſs* and *infidelity*, far more malignant evils, breathe deadly contagion, and taint the morals of multitudes around us; yet, if the great Father of ſpirits "hide us in the hollow "of his hand," we ſhall hold faſt our integrity, and be faithful unto death.

Let then, deareſt LORD, O! let thy ſervant, and the people committed to his care, be received into thy protection. Let us take ſanctuary under that *tree of life*, erected in thy ignominious croſs. Let us fly for ſafety to that *city* of *refuge*, opened in thy bleeding wounds. Theſe ſhall be a ſacred hiding-place, not to be pierced by the flames of divine wrath, or the fiery darts of temptation. Thy dying merits, and perfect obedience, ſhall be to our ſouls, *as rivers of water in a dry place*, or *as the ſhadow of a great rock in a weary land* *.

But moſt of all, in that *laſt tremendous* day, when the heavens are rent aſunder, and wrapped up like a ſcroll: when thy almighty arm ſhall arreſt the ſun in his career, and daſh to pieces the ſtructure of the univerſe: when the dead, both ſmall and great, ſhall be gathered before the throne of thy glory; and the fates of all mankind, hang on the very point of a final irreverſible deciſion:—Then, bleſſed JESUS, let us be owned by thee, and we ſhall not be *aſhamed*; defended by thee, and we ſhall not be *afraid*. O! may we, at that awful, that unutterably important juncture, be covered with the wings of thy redeeming love; and we ſhall behold all the horrible convulſions of expiring nature, with compoſure, with comfort! We ſhall even welcome the diſſolution of all things, as the *times of refreſhing from the preſence of the* LORD †.

There are, I perceive, who ſtill attend the flowers; and, in defiance of the ſun, ply their work on every expanded bloſſom. The *bees* I mean. That nation of chymiſts!

* Iſa. xxxii. 2. † Acts iii. 19.

chymiſts! to whom nature has communicated the rare and valuable ſecret, of enriching themſelves, without impoveriſhing others. Who extract the moſt delicious ſyrup, from every fragrant herb; without wounding it's ſubſtance, or diminiſhing it's odours.—I take the more notice of theſe ingenious operators; becauſe, I would willingly make them my pattern *. While the gay *butterfly*, flutters her painted wings; and ſips a little fantaſtic delight, only for the preſent moment. While the gloomy *ſpider*, worſe than idly buſied, is preparing his inſidious nets for deſtruction; or ſucking venom, even from the moſt wholeſome plants. This frugal community, are wiſely employed in providing for futurity; and collecting a copious ſtock of the moſt balmy treaſures.—And O! might theſe meditations ſink into my ſoul! Would the GOD, who ſuggeſted each heavenly thought; vouchſafe to convert it, into an *eſtabliſhed principle*; to determine all my inclinations, and regulate my whole conduct! I ſhould, then, gather advantages from the ſame blooming objects; more precious than your golden ſtores, ye induſtrious artiſts. I alſo ſhould go home, laden with the *richeſt ſweets*, and the *nobleſt ſpoils*; though I crop not a leaf, nor call a ſingle flower my own.

Here I behold, aſſembled in *one view*, almoſt all the various beauties, which have been ſeverally entertaining my imagination. The *viſtas*, ſtruck through an ancient wood, or formed by rows of venerable elms; conducting the ſpectator's obſervation, to ſome remarkable object; or leading the traveller's footſteps, to this delightful ſeat:—the *walls*, enriched with fruit-trees, and faced with a covering of their leafy extentions; I ſhould rather have ſaid, hung with different pieces of nature's nobleſt tapeſtry:—the *walks*, neatly ſhorn, and lined with verdure; or finely ſmoothed, and coated with gravel:

* — — *Ego apis matinæ*
More modoque
Grata carpentis thyma. HOR.

vel:—the *alleys*, arched with ſhades, to embower our noon-tide repoſe; or thrown open for the free acceſſion of air, to invite us to our evening recreation:—the decent *edgings* of box, which incloſe, like a plain ſelvage, each beautiful compartment, and it's ſplendid figures:—the ſhapely *evergreens*, and *flowering ſhrubs*; which ſtrike the eye, and appear with peculiar dignity, in this diſtant ſituation:—the *baſon*, with it's cryſtal fount, floating in the centre; and diffuſing an agreeable freſhneſs, through the whole:—the waters, falling from a remote *caſcade*; and gently murmuring, as they flow along the pebbles:—*theſe*, added to the reſt; and all ſo diſpoſed, that each recommends, and endears each; render the *whole*, a moſt ſweet raviſhing ſcene, of order and variety, of elegance and magnificence.

From ſo many lovely proſpects, cluſtering upon the ſight, it is impoſſible not to be reminded of *heaven*. That world of bliſs; thoſe regions of light; where the Lamb that was ſlain manifeſts his beatific preſence, and his ſaints live for evermore.—But O! what pencil can ſketch out a draught of that goodly land! What colours, or what ſtyle, can expreſs the ſplendors of IMMANUEL's kingdom! Would ſome celeſtial hand draw aſide the veil, but for one moment; and permit us to throw a ſingle glance on thoſe divine abodes; how would all ſublunary poſſeſſions, become tarniſhed in our eyes, and grow flat upon our taſte! A glimpſe, a tranſient glimpſe of thoſe unutterable beatitudes, would captivate our ſouls, and engroſs all their faculties. *Eden* itſelf, after ſuch a viſion, would appear a chearleſs *deſart*; and all earthly charms, intolerable *deformity*.

Very *excellent things are ſpoken of thee, thou city of* GOD *. Volumes have been written, and thoſe by inſpired men, to diſplay the wonders of thy perfections. All that is rich and reſplendent in the viſible creation, has been called in to aid our conceptions, and elevate

* Pſalm lxxxvii. 2.

our ideas. But, indeed, no tongue can utter; no pen can deſcribe; no fancy can imagine; what GOD, of his unbounded munificence, has prepared for them that love him.—Seeing then, that all terreſtrial things muſt come to a ſpeedy end; and there remaineth a reſt, a bliſsful and everlaſting reſt, for the people of GOD; let me never be too fondly attached, to any preſent ſatisfactions. Weaned from whatever is temporal, may I maintain a ſuperior indifference, for ſuch tranſitory enjoyments; but long, long earneſtly, for the manſions that are above; the paradiſe "which the LORD hath planted, and not man." Thither, may I tranſmit the chief of my *converſation*; and from thence expect the whole of my *happineſs*. Be that the ſacred, powerful magnet, which ever influences my heart; ever attracts my affections. *There*, are ſuch tranſcendent glories, as eye has not ſeen: *there*, are ſuch tranſporting pleaſures, as ear has not heard: *there*, is ſuch a fulneſs of joy, as the thought of man cannot conceive.

Into that conſummate felicity; thoſe eternal fruitions; permit me, Madam, to wiſh you, in due time, an *abundant entrance*: and to aſſure you, that this wiſh is breathed with the ſame ſincerity and ardor, for my honoured correſpondent, as it is, MADAM, for

Your moſt obedient, &c.

J. HERVEY.

A DES-

A DESCANT UPON CREATION.

IF the reader pleaſes to look back on page 118; he will find me engaged by a *promiſſory* note, to ſubjoin a *DESCANT* upon *CREATION*.

To *know the love of* CHRIST; to have ſuch a deep apprehenſion of his unſpeakable kindneſs, as may produce in our hearts an adoring gratitude, and an unfeigned faith; this, according to St. *Paul*'s eſtimate, is the higheſt and happieſt attainment in the ſacred ſcience of chriſtianity *. What follows, is an attempt to aſſiſt the attentive mind, in learning a line or two of that beſt and greateſt leſſon. It introduces the moſt conſpicuous parts of the viſible ſyſtem, as ſo many *prompters* to our dull affections; each ſuggeſting a *hint* adapted to the important occaſion, and ſuited to it's reſpective character.

Can

* Eph. iii. 19.

Can there be a more powerful incentive to devout *gratitude*; than to conſider the magnificent and delicate ſcenes of the univerſe, with a particular reference to CHRIST, as the Creator?—Every object, viewed in this light, will ſurely adminiſter inceſſant recruits, to the languiſhing lamp of divine love. Every production in nature, will ſtrike a ſpark into the ſoul; and the whole creation concur, to raiſe the ſmoaking flax into a flame.

Can any thing impart a ſtronger *joy* to the believer; or more effectually confirm his *faith* in the crucified JESUS; than to behold the heavens declaring his glory, and the firmament ſhewing his handy-work? Surely, it muſt be matter of inexpreſſible conſolation, to the poor ſinner; to obſerve the honours of his Redeemer, written with ſun-beams, over all the face of the world.

We delight to read an account of our incarnate JEHOVAH; as he is revealed in the books of *Moſes* and the prophets, as he is diſplayed in the writings of the evangeliſts and apoſtles. Let us alſo endeavour to ſee a ſketch of his perfections; as they ſtand delineated in that ſtately volume, where every *leaf*, is a ſpacious plain—every *line*, a flowing brook—every *period*, a lofty mountain.

Should any of my readers be unexerciſed in ſuch ſpeculations, I beg leave (in purſuance of my promiſe) to preſent them with a *ſpecimen*: or to offer a clue, which may poſſibly lead their minds into this moſt improving and delightful train of thinking.

Should any be inclined to ſuſpect the ſolidity of the following obſervations; or to condemn them, as the voice of rant, and the lawleſs flight of fancy; I muſt intreat ſuch perſons to recollect, that the grand doctrine, the hinge on which they all turn, is warranted and eſtabliſhed by the unanimous teſtimony of the inſpired penmen. Who frequently celebrate IMMANUEL, or

CHRIST

CHRIST JESUS, as the great almighty cauſe of all: aſſuring us, that *all things were created by him, and for him; and that in him all things conſiſt* *.

On ſuch a ſubject what is wonderful, is far from being *extravagant*. To be wonderful, is the inſeparable characteriſtic of GOD and his works; eſpecially, of that moſt diſtinguiſhed and glorious even of the divine works, REDEMPTION. So glorious, that "all the miracles "in *Egypt*, and the marvellous acts in the field of "*Zoan*;" all that the *Jewiſh* annals have recorded, or the human ear has heard; all dwindle into *trivial events*, are ſcarce worthy to be *remembered* †, in compariſon of this infinitely grand and infinitely gracious tranſaction.—Kindled, therefore, into pleaſing aſtoniſhment, by ſuch a ſurvey, let me give full ſcope to my meditations. Let me pour out my whole ſoul on the boundleſs ſubject; not much regarding the limits, which cold criticiſm, or colder unbelief, might preſcribe.

O ye *angels*, that ſurround the throne; ye princes of heaven, "that excel in ſtrength," and are cloathed with tranſcendent brightneſs; he, who placed you in thoſe ſtations of exalted honour, and dignified your nature with ſuch illuſtrious endowments; he, whom you all obey, and all adore: HE took not on him the angelic form, but was made fleſh, and found in faſhion as a man. Like us wretched mortals, he was ſubject to wearineſs, pain, and every infirmity, ſin only excepted.—That we might, one day, be raiſed to your ſublime abodes; be adopted into your bliſsful ſociety; and join with your tranſported choir, in giving glory to HIM that ſitteth upon the throne, and to the LAMB for ever and ever ‡.

O ye

* *Col.* i. 16, 17. Before my reader enters upon the following deſcant, he is deſired to peruſe the note, p. 92.

† Iſa. xliii. 18. ‡ Rev. v. 13.

O ye *heavens*; whoſe azure arches riſe immenſely high, and ſtretch unmeaſurably wide. Stupendous amphitheatre! amidſt whoſe vaſt expanſive circuit, orbs of the moſt dreadful grandeur are perpetually running their amazing races. Unfathomable depths of æther! where worlds unnumbered float; and, to our limited ſight, worlds unnumbered are loſt.—He, who adjuſted your dimenſions with his ſpan, and formed the magnificent ſtructure with his word; HE was once wrapt in ſwaddling cloaths, and laid in a manger.—That the benefits accruing to his people, through his moſt meritorious humiliation, might have no other meaſure of their value than immenſity; might run parallel, in their duration, with eternity.

Ye *ſtars*; that beam with inextinguiſhable brilliancy, through the midnight ſky. Oceans of flame, and centres of worlds, though ſeemingly little points of light! —He, who ſhone, with eſſential effulgence, innumerable ages, before your twinkling tapers were kindled; and will ſhine with everlaſting majeſty and beauty, when your places in the firmament ſhall be known no more. HE was involved, for many years, in the deepeſt obſcurity; lay concealed in the contemptible city *Nazareth*; lay diſguiſed, under the mean habit of a carpenter's ſon.—That he might plant the heavens *, as it were, with new conſtellations; and array theſe clods of earth, theſe houſes of clay, with a radiancy, far ſuperior to yours. A radiancy, which will adorn the very heaven of heavens, when you ſhall vaniſh away like ſmoke †; or expire, as momentary ſparks from the ſmitten ſteel.

Comets

* Iſa. li. 16.

† Alluding to a paſſage in *Iſaiah*, which is, I think, grand and elevated beyond all compariſon.—*Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath: for the heavens ſhall vaniſh away like ſmoke, and the earth ſhall wax old like a garment, and they that dwell there-*

Comets; that ſometimes ſhoot into the illimitable tracts of æther, farther than the diſcernment of our eye is able to follow; ſometimes, return from the long, long excurſion, and ſweep our affrighted hemiſphere with your enormous fiery train. That ſometimes make near approaches to the ſun, and burn almoſt in his immediate beams; ſometimes, retire to the remoteſt diſtance, and freeze, for ages, in the exceſſive rigours of winter. He, who at his ſovereign pleaſure, withdraws the blazing wonder: or leads forth the portentous ſtranger, to ſhake terror over guilty kingdoms. HE was overwhelmed with the moſt ſhocking amazement, and plunged into the deepeſt anxiety; was chilled with apprehenſions of fear, and ſcorched by the flames of avenging wrath. —That I, and other depraved rebellious creatures, might not be eternally agitated, with the extremes of jarring paſſions; oppoſite, yet, on either ſide, tormenting. Far more tormenting to the ſoul, than the ſevereſt degrees of your heat and cold to the human ſenſe.

Ye *planets*; that, winged with unimaginable ſpeed, traverſe the regions of the ſky. Sometimes climbing millions and millions of miles above, ſometimes deſcending as far below, the great axle of your motions. Ye, that are ſo minutely faithful, to the viciſſitudes of day and night; ſo exactly punctual, in bringing on the changes of your reſpective ſeaſons.—He, who launched you, at firſt, from his mighty arm; who continually impels you, with ſuch wonderful rapidity; and guides you, with ſuch perfect regularity. Who fixes "the habitation of his holineſs and his glory," infinite heights, above your ſcanty rounds. HE once became a helpleſs infant; ſojourned in our inferior world; fled from

ſhall die like the feeble inſect: *but my righteouſneſs ſhall be for ever, and my ſalvation ſhall not be aboliſhed*, Iſa. li. 6.—With the great *Vitringa*, I tranſlate the words—*Ken Kemu*, not, *in like manner*; but, *like the feeble inſect*. Which renders the period more complete; the ſenſe more emphatical; and is more agreeable to the genius of the ſacred original.

from the perſecutor's ſword; and wandered as a vagabond in a foreign land.—That he might lead our feet into the way of peace; that he might bring us aliens near to God, bring us exiles home to heaven.

Thou *ſun*; inexhauſted ſource of light, and heat, and comfort! Who, without the aſſiſtance of any other fire, ſheddeſt day through a thouſand realms; and, not confining thy munificence to realms only, extendeſt thy enlightening influences to ſurrounding worlds. Prime chearer of the animal, and great enlivener of the vegetable tribes! So beautiful in thyſelf, ſo beneficial in thy effects, that erring heathens addreſſed thee with adorations, and miſtook thee for thy Maker!—He, who filled thy orb with a profuſion of luſtre; before whom thy meridian ſplendors are but a ſhade.—HE diveſted himſelf of his all-tranſcending diſtinctions, and drew a veil over the effulgence of his divinity; that, by ſpeaking to us, face to face, as a man ſpeaketh unto his friend, he might diſpel our intellectual darkneſs. His "viſage "was marred *," and he became the ſcorn of men, the outcaſt of the people; that by this manifeſtation of his unutterably tender regard for our welfare, he might diffuſe many a gleam of joy through our dejected minds. That in another ſtate of things, he might clothe even our fallen nature, with the honours of that magnificent luminary; and give all the righteous to ſhine forth as the ſun, in the kingdom of their Father.

Thou *moon*; that walkeſt among the hoſt of ſtars, and, in thy lucid appearance, art ſuperior to them all. Fair ruler of the night! Sometimes, half-reſtoring the day, with thy waxing brightneſs; ſometimes, waning into dimneſs, and ſcarcely ſcattering the nocturnal gloom; ſometimes, covered with ſackcloth, and alarming the gazing nations.—He, who dreſſes thy opake globe, in beaming, but borrowed ſilver; he, whoſe dignity is un-

* Iſa. lii. 14.

unchangeable, underived, and all his own; he vouchsafed to wear a body of clay. HE was content to appear as in a bloody eclipſe, ſhorn of his reſplendent beams, and ſurrounded with a night of horror, which knew not one reviving ray.—Thus, has he impowered his church, and all believers, to tread the moon under their feet*. Hence, inſpired with the hope of brighter glory, and of more enduring bliſs, are they enabled to triumph over all the vain anxieties, and vainer amuſements, of this ſublunary, precarious, mutable world.

Ye *thunders*; that, awfully grumbling in the diſtant clouds, ſeem to meditate indignation, and form the firſt eſſays of a far more frightful peal; or, ſuddenly burſting over our heads, rend the vault above, and ſhake the ground below, with the hideous, horrid crack. Ye, that ſend your tremendous vollies from pole to pole, ſtartling the ſavage herds †, and aſtoniſhing the human race.—He, who permits terror to ſound her trumpet, in your deep, prolonged, inlarging, aggravated roar: HE uttered a feeble infantile cry in the ſtable, and ſtrong expiring groans on the accurſed tree.—That he might, in the gentleſt accents, whiſper peace to our ſouls; and, at length, tune our voices to the melody of heaven.

O ye *lightnings*; that brood, and lie couchant, in the ſulphureous vapours; that glance, with forked fury, from the angry gloom, ſwifter and fiercer than the lion ruſhes from his den; or open into vaſt expanſive ſheets of flame, ſublimely waved over the proſtrate world, and fearfully lingering in the affrighted ſkies. Ye, that formerly laid in aſhes the licentious abodes of luſt and violence; that will, ere long, ſet on fire the elements, and co-operate in the conflagration of the globe.—He, who kindles your flaſh, and directs you when to ſally, and where to ſtrike; he, who commiſſions your whirling bolts, whom to kill, and whom to ſpare: HE reſigned his ſacred perſon to the moſt barbarous indigni-

* Rev. xii. 1. † Pſal. xxix. 8.

ties; ſubmitted his beneficent hands to the ponderous hammer, and the piercing nail; yea, with-held not his heart, his very heart, from the ſtab of the executioner's ſpear. And, inſtead of flaſhing confuſion on his outrageous tormentors; inſtead of plunging them to the depths of hell with his frown; he cried—in his laſt moments, and with his agonizing lips, he cried; FATHER, FORGIVE THEM; FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO!—O! what a pattern of patience for his ſaints! What an object of admiration for angels! What a conſtellation of every mild, amiable, and benign virtue; ſhining, in this hour of darkneſs, with ineffable ſplendor and beauty*!—Hence, hence it is, that we are not trembling

* One can hardly forbear animadverting upon the *diſingenuous* temper, and perverſe taſte of *Celſus*; who attempts to turn, this moſt diſtinguiſhing and ornamental part of our LORD's life, into ridicule and reproach.—Having ſpoken of CHRIST, as deſpitefully uſed, and arrayed in a purple robe; crowned with thorns; and holding, by way of mock majeſty, a reed inſtead of a ſceptre (for he enters into all theſe circumſtances, which is a teſtimony to their truth even from the mouth of an enemy) he adds—Τι ὠχ, ει μη προσθεν, αλλα νυν γε θειον τι επιδεικνυλαι; και της αισχυνης ταυλης εαυλον ρυεσθαι, και τες ὑβριζονλας εις εαυλον τε και τον παλερα δικαια; Orig. contra CELS. p. 81. i. e. *Why, in the name of wonder, does He not, on this occaſion, at leaſt, act the* GOD? *Why does He not deliver himſelf from this ſhocking ignominy; or execute ſome ſignal vengeance, on the authors of ſuch injurious and abuſive inſults, both of Himſelf and his Father?*—Why, *Celſus?* Becauſe, HE was meekneſs and gentleneſs itſelf: Whereas *your* deities were ſlaves to their own turbulent and reſentful paſſions. Becauſe, *they* were little better than ſavages in human ſhape; who too often made a merit of ſlaughter, and took a horrid pride in ſpilling blood. While CHRIST was the Prince of Peace, and came not to deſtroy men's lives, but to ſave. Becauſe, any madman on earth, or fury from hell, is capable of venting his rage. But who, amidſt ſuch unſufferable provocations and barbarities; who, having in his own hand, the power to reſcue himſelf, the power to avenge himſelf; could ſubmit to all, with an unruffled ſerenity of patience; and not only not be exaſperated, but *overcome*, in ſo triumphant a manner, *evil with good?* None but CHRIST! None but CHRIST! This was compaſſion worthy of a GOD; clemency and charity *truly divine.*

Therefore, the calumny raiſed by the ſame virulent objector, in another place, carries it's own confutation: or rather, falls with a weight

trembling under the lightnings of mount *Sinai*; that we are not blasted by the flames of divine vengeance; or doomed to dwell with everlasting burnings.

Ye frowning *wintry clouds*; oceans pendent in the air, and burdening the winds. He, in whose hand, you are an overflowing scourge; or, by whose appointment, an arsenal * of warlike stores. He, who opens your sluices, and a flood gushes forth; to destroy the fruits of the earth, and drown the husbandman's hopes: who moulds you into frozen balls, and you are shot, linked with death †, on the troops of his enemies. HE, instead of discharging the furiousness of his wrath upon this guilty head; poured out his prayers; poured out his sighs; poured out his very soul: for me and my fellow-transgressors.—That, by virtue of his inestimable propi-

weight of *infamy* on his dunghill deities; while it bears a most *honourable* testimony, to the majestic and invincible meekness of our Saviour.—Συ μεν, says he to the Christian, τα αγαλματα των λοιδορων καλαγελας, ος ουδεν γε τον Διονυσον η τον Ηρακλεα παροντα υβριδορησας, ουκ αν ισως χειρων απηλλαξας· τον γε σον Θεον παροντα καλαβλασφημουντες και καλαζωντες, ωδεν οι τυχοντα δεδασανιστε πεπονθασιν, ibid. p. 404. i. e. *You, indeed, take upon you, to deride the images of our deities; but if* Bacchus *himself, or* Hercules *had been present, you would not have dared to offer such an affront; or if you had been so presumptuous, would have severely smarted for your insolence. Whereas, they who tormented the very person of your* GOD, *and even extended him with mortal agony on the cross, suffered no effects of his displeasure.*

* *Juvenal* seems to consider the clouds, under this same character, in that beautiful line,

Quicquid habent telorum armamentaria cœli.

† *Job* has informed us, for what purpose the magazines of the firmament are stocked with hail. That they may be ready, *against the day of battle and war*, Job xxxviii. 23.—*Joshua* has recorded, what terrible slaughter has been made, by those *missive weapons* of the Almighty, *Josh.* x. 11.—Modern historians relate, that, when *Edward* III. invaded *France*, a shower of hailstones descended, of such a prodigious size, that six thousand horses, and one thousand men, were struck dead instantaneously.—But, the most dreadful description of this *great ordnance* of the heavens, is given us in *Rev.* xvi. 21. *There fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, every stone about the weight of a talent.*

tiation, the overflowings of divine good-will might be extended to ſinful men; that the ſkies might pour down righteouſneſs; and peace on her downy wings, peace with her balmy bleſſings, deſcend to dwell on earth.

Ye *vernal clouds*; furls of finer air, folds of ſofter moiſture. He, who draws you in copious exhalations, from the briny deep; bids you leave every diſtaſteful quality behind; and become floating fountains of ſweeteſt waters. He, who diſſolves you into gentle rain, and diſmiſſes you in fruitful ſhowers; who kindly commiſſions you, to drop down fatneſs, as you fall, and to ſcatter flowers over the field.—HE, in the unutterable bitterneſs of his ſpirit, was without any comforting ſenſe of his almighty Father's preſence. He, when his bones were burnt up like a firebrand, had not one drop of that ſacred conſolation, which, on many of his afflicted ſervants, has been diſtilled as the evening dews, and has "given ſongs in the night" of diſtreſs.—That, from this unallayed and inconſolable anguiſh of our all-gracious maſter, we, as from a well of ſalvation, might derive large draughts of ſpiritual refreſhment.

Thou grand *ethereal bow*; whoſe beauties fluſh the firmament, and charm every ſpectator. He, who paints thee on the fluid ſkirts of the ſky; who decks thee with all the pride of colours; and bends thee into that graceful and majeſtic figure. At whoſe command, thy vivid ſtreaks ſweetly riſe, or ſwiftly fade.—HE, through all his life, was arrayed in the humble garb of poverty; and, at his exit, wore the gorgeous garment of contempt. Inſomuch, that even his own familiar friends, aſhamed or afraid to own him, "hid as it were their "faces from him*."—To teach us a becoming diſdain, for the unſubſtantial and tranſitory glitter of all worldly

* *Iſa.* liii. 3. *Mamenu penim kemſter—Fuit tanquam aliquis, a quo quiſque faciem occultaret.* *He was as ſome* flagitious and *abandoned wretch, from whom every one,* diſdaining ſuch a character, and diſclaiming ſuch an acquaintance, ſtudiouſly *hid his face.*

worldly vanities. To introduce us, in robes brighter than the tinges of thy reſplendent arch; even in the robes of his own immaculate righteouſneſs, to introduce us before that auguſt and venerable throne, which the peaceful rainbow ſurrounds. Surrounds, as a pledge of inviolable fidelity, and infinite mercy.

Ye *ſtorms* and *tempeſts*, which vex the continent, and toſs the ſeas; which daſh navies on the rocks, and drive foreſts from their roots. He, whoſe breath rouſes you into ſuch reſiſtleſs fury, and whoſe nod controuls you in your wildeſt career. He, who holds the rapid and raging hurricane, in ſtreightened reins; and walks, dreadfully ſerene, on the very wings of the wind. HE went, all meek and gentle, like a lamb to the ſlaughter for us; and, as a ſheep before her ſhearers is dumb, ſo he opened not his mouth.—Thus, are we inſtructed to bear, with decent magnanimity, the various aſſaults of adverſity; and to paſs, with a becoming tranquillity of temper, through all the rude blaſts of injurious treatment. Thus, are we delivered from the unutterable fiercer ſtorms, of incenſed and inexorable juſtice; from the "fire, the brimſtone, and the horrible tempeſt, which "will be the final portion of the ungodly."

Thou *peſtilence*, that ſcattereſt ten thouſand poiſons from thy baleful wings; tainting the air, and infecting the nations. Under whoſe malignant influence, joy is blaſted, and nature ſickens; mighty regions are depopulated, and once crouded cities are left without inhabitants. He, who arms thee with inevitable deſtruction, and bids thee march before* his angry countenance; to ſpread deſolation among the tents of the wicked, and be the forerunner of far more fearful indignation. HE, in his holy humanity, was arraigned as a criminal; and, though innocence itſelf, yea, the very pattern of perfection, was condemned to die, like the moſt execrable miſ-

* *Before him went the peſtilence*, Hab. iii. 5.

creant. As a nuiſance to ſociety, and the very bane of the public happineſs, he was hurried away to execution, and hammered to the gibbet. That by his blood, he might prepare a ſovereign medicine, to cure us of a more fatal diſtemper, than the peſtilence which walketh in darkneſs, or the ſickneſs which deſtroyeth at noon-day. That he might himſelf ſay to our laſt enemy, "O death, I will be thy plague; O grave, I will be thy "deſtruction *."

Heat; whoſe burning influence parches the *Libyan* wilds; tans into ſoot, the *Ethiopian*'s complexion; and makes every ſpecies of life pant, and droop, and languiſh. *Cold*, whoſe icy breath glazes yearly the *Ruſſian* ſeas; often glues the frozen ſailor to the cordage; and ſtiffens the traveller into a ſtatue of rigid fleſh.—HE, who ſometimes blends you both, and produces the moſt agreeable temperature; ſometimes, ſuffers you to act ſeparately, and rage with intolerable ſeverity. That King of heaven, and controuler of univerſal nature, when dwelling in a tabernacle of clay, was expoſed to chilling damps, and ſmitten with ſultry beams. The ſtars, in their midnight watches, heard him pray; and the ſun, in his meridian fervours, ſaw him toil.—Hence are our frozen hearts diſſolved, into a mingled flow of wonder, love and joy: being conſcious of a deliverance from thoſe inſufferable flames, which, kindled by divine indignation, burn to the loweſt hell.

Thou *ocean*, vaſt world of waters! He, who ſunk that capacious bed for thy reception, and poured the liquid element into unfathomable channels; before whom, all thy foaming billows, and floating mountains, are as the ſmall drop of a bucket. Who, by the leaſt intimation of his will, ſwells thy fluid kingdoms, in wild confuſion, to mingle with the clouds; or reduces them, in calm compoſure, to ſlumber on the ſhores. He, who once

* Hoſ. xiii. 14.

once gave thee a warrant to overwhelm the whole earth, and bury all it's degenerate inhabitants in a watry grave, but has, now, laid an everlasting embargo on thy boisterous waves; and bound thee, all fierce and madding as thou art, in chains stronger than adamant, yet formed of despicable sand.—All the waves of vengeance and wrath, of tribulation and anguish, passed over HIS crucified body, and HIS agonizing soul. That we might emerge from those depths of misery, from that abyss of guilt, into which we were plunged by *Adam*'s fall, and more irretrievably sunk by our own transgressions. That, at the last, we might be restored to that happy world, which is represented, in the vision of GOD, as having "no sea*;" to denote it's perpetual stability, and undisturbed serenity.

Ye *mountains*, that overlook the clouds, and project a shade into distant provinces. Everlasting pyramids of nature, not to be shaken by conflicting elements; not to be shattered by the bolts of thunder; nor impaired even by the ravages of time.—He, who bid your ridges rise so high, and your foundations stand so fast. He, in whose scale, you are lighter than dust; in whose eye, you are less than nothing.—HE sunk beneath a load of woes; woes insupportable, but not his own; when he took our iniquities upon himself, and heaved the more than mountainous burden from a guilty world.

Ye verdant *woods*, that crown our hills, and are crowned yourselves with leafy honours. Ye humble *shrubs*, adorned, in spring, with opening blossoms; and fanned, in summer, by gentle gales. Ye, that in distant climes, or in cultivated gardens, breathe out spicy odours, and embalm the air with delightful perfumes.—Your all-glorious and ever-blessed Creator's head, was incircled with the thorny wreath; his face was defiled with contumelious spitting; and his body bathed in a bloody sweat.

* Rev. xxi. 1.

ſweat. That we might wear the crown, the crown of glory, which fadeth not away; and live for evermore, ſurrounded with delights, as much ſurpaſſing yours, as yours exceed the rugged deſolations of winter.

Thou mantling *vine*; he who hangs on thy ſlender ſhoots, the rich, tranſparent, weighty cluſter. Who, under thy unornamented foliage, and amidſt the pores of thy otherwiſe worthleſs bough, prepares the liquor—the refined and exalted liquor, which chears the nations, and fills the cup of joy. *Trees*, whoſe branches are elevated and waving in air; or diffuſed, in eaſy confinement, along a ſunny wall. He, who bends you with a lovely burden of delicious fruits; whoſe genial warmth beautifies their rind, and mellows their taſte.—HE, when voluntarily ſubject to our wants, inſtead of being refreſhed with your generous juices, or regaled with your luſcious pulp; had a loathſome potion of vinegar, mingled with gall, addreſſed to his lips.—That we might ſit under the ſhadow of his merits, with great tranquillity and the utmoſt complacency. That, ere long, being admitted into the paradiſe of GOD, we might eat of the tree of life *; and drink new wine with him, in his Father's kingdom.

Ye luxuriant *meadows*; he who, without the ſeedſman's induſtry, repleniſhes your irriguous lap, with never-failing crops of herbage; and enamels their chearful green, with flowers of every hue.—Ye fertile *fields*; he, who bleſſes the labours of the huſbandman; enriches your well-tilled plains with waving harveſts, and calls forth the ſtaff of life from your furrows. He, who cauſes both meadows and fields to laugh and ſing, for the abundance of plenty.—HE was no ſtranger to corroding hunger, and parching thirſt. He, alas! eat the bitter bread of woe, and had "plenteouſneſs of "tears to drink."—That we might partake of richer dain-

* Rev. ii. 7.

dainties, than thoſe which are produced by the dew of heaven, and proceed from the fatneſs of the earth. That we might feed on "the hidden manna," and eat the bread which giveth life, eternal life, unto the world.

Ye *mines*, rich in yellow ore, or bright with veins of ſilver; that diſtribute your ſhining treaſures, as far as winds can waft the veſſel of commerce; that beſtow your alms on monarchs, and have princes for your penſioners.—Ye beds of *gems*, toy-ſhops of nature! Which form, in dark retirement, the glittering ſtone. *Diamonds*, that ſparkle with a brilliant water; *rubies*, that glow with a crimſon flame: *emeralds*, dipped in the freſheſt verdure of ſpring; *ſapphires*, decked with the faireſt drapery of the ſky: *topaz*, emblazed with a golden gleam; *amethyſt*, impurpled with the bluſhes of the morning.—He, who tinctures the metallic duſt, and conſolidates the lucid drop; HE, when ſojourning on earth, had no riches, but the riches of diſintereſted benevolence; had no ornament, but the ornament of unſpotted purity. Poor he was in his circumſtances, and mean in all his accommodations; that WE might be rich in grace, and "obtain ſalvation with eternal glory." That we might inhabit the new *Jeruſalem*, that ſplendid city! Whoſe ſtreets are paved with gold; whoſe gates are formed of pearl; and the walls garniſhed with all manner of precious ſtones *.

Ye guſhing *fountains*, that trickle potable ſilver through the matted graſs. Ye fine tranſparent *ſtreams*, that glide, in cryſtal waves, along your fringed banks. Ye deep and ſtately *rivers*, that wind and wander in your courſe, to ſpread your favours wider; that gladden kingdoms in your progreſs, and augment the ſea with your tribute.—He, who ſupplies all your currents, from his own ever-flowing and inexhauſtible liberality: HE, when his nerves were racked with exquiſite pain, and his blood inflamed

* Rev. xxi. 19, 21.

inflamed by a raging fever, cried, I THIRST; and was denied (unparalleled hardſhip!) in this his great extremity, was denied the poor refreſhment of a ſingle drop of water.—That we, having all-ſufficiency in all things, might abound to every good work; might be filled with the fulneſs of ſpiritual bleſſings here, and hereafter be ſatisfied with that fulneſs of joy, which is at GOD's right hand for evermore.

Ye *birds*, chearful tenants of the bough, gaily dreſſed in gloſſy plumage; who wake the morn, and ſolace the groves, with your artleſs lays. Inimitable architects! who, without rule or line, build your penſile ſtructures with all the nicety of proportion. You have each his commodious neſt, roofed with ſhades, and lined with warmth, to protect and cheriſh the callow brood.—But he, who tuned your throats to harmony, and taught you that curious ſkill; HE was a man of ſorrows, and had not where to lay his head. Had not where to lay his head, till he felt the pangs of diſſolution, and was laid in the ſilent grave.—That we, dwelling under the wings of Omnipotence, and reſting in the boſom of infinite love, might ſpend an harmonious eternity, in "ſinging "the ſong of *Moſes* and of the LAMB."

Bees, induſtrious workmen! That ſweep, with busy wing, the flowery garden; and ſearch the blooming heath; and ſip the melliſluous dews. Strangers to idleneſs! That ply, with inceſſant aſſiduity, your pleaſing taſk; and ſuffer no opening bloſſom to paſs unexplored, no ſunny gleam to ſlip away unimproved. Moſt ingenious artificers! That cling to the fragrant buds; drain them of their treaſured ſweets; and extract (if I may ſpeak) even the odoriferous ſouls of herbs, and plants and flowers.—You, when you have compleated your work; have collected, refined, and ſecurely lodged the ambroſial ſtores: when you might reaſonably expect the peaceful fruition of your acquiſitions; you, alas! are

barbarouſly deſtroyed, and leave your hoarded delicacies to others: leave them to be enjoyed by your very murderers. I cannot but pity your hard deſtiny!—How then ſhould my bowels melt with ſympathy, and my eyes flow with tears*; when I remember, that *thus, thus* it fared with your and our incarnate Maker! After a life of the moſt exemplary and exalted piety; a life, filled with offices of beneficence, and labours of love; HE was, by wicked hands, crucified and ſlain. He left the honey of his toil, the balm of his blood, and the riches of his obedience, to be ſhared among others: to be ſhared even among thoſe, who too often crucify him afreſh, and put him to open ſhame.

Shall I mention the animal †, which *ſpins* her ſoft, her ſhining, her exquiſitely fine *ſilken* thread? Whoſe matchleſs manufactures lend an ornament to grandeur, and make royalty itſelf more magnificent.—Shall I take notice of the cell, in which, when the gaiety and buſineſs of life are over, the little recluſe immures herſelf, and ſpends the remainder of her days in retirement?—Shall I rather obſerve the ſepulchre, which, when cloyed with

* Can'ſt thou, ungrateful man, his torments ſee,
Nor *drop* a *tear* for HIM, who *pour'd* his *blood* for Thee?
PITT's *Poems*.

† No one, I hope, will be offended at my introducing, on *ſuch* an occaſion, creatures of ſo low a rank: ſince, even the volumes of inſpiration ſeem to lend me the ſanction of their ſacred authority. As they diſdain not to compare the bleſſed JESUS to a *door*, a *highway*, &c. and, perhaps, all compariſons, which reſpect a being of *infinite* dignity, are not only mean, but *equally* mean and unworthy.

I am ſenſible, likewiſe, that in this paragraph, and ſome others, if the circumſtances are not completely correſpondent. But if, in the grand particulars, the reddition anſwers to the deſcription; this, truſt, will be ſufficient for my purpoſe, and ſatisfactory to my reaers.—Perhaps, it would be no miſtaken caution, to apply the ſame obſervation to many of the beautiful ſimilitudes, parables, and allegories, uſed by our LORD: ſuch as the *brazen ſerpent*, the *unjuſt* ſteward, the *thief* in the night, &c. Which, if ſcrupulouſly ſifted, or rigorouſly ſtrained, for an intire coincidence in *every* circumſtance, muſt appear to great diſadvantage, and lead into palpable inconveniencies.

with pleaſure, and weary of the world, ſhe prepares for her own interment? Or how, when a ſtated period is elapſed, ſhe wakes from a death-like inactivity; breaks the incloſure of her tomb; throws off the duſky ſhroud; aſſumes a new form; puts on a more ſumptuous array; and, from an inſect creeping on the ground, becomes a winged inhabitant of the air?—No: this is a poor *reptile*; and therefore unworthy to ſerve as an illuſtration, when any character of the Son of GOD comes under conſideration. But let me correct myſelf. Was not CHRIST (to uſe the language of his own bleſſed Spirit) *a worm, and no man* *! In appearance ſuch, and treated as ſuch.—Did he not alſo bequeath the fine linen of his own moſt perfect righteouſneſs, to compoſe the marriage-garment † for our diſarrayed and defiled ſouls? Did he not, before his fleſh ſaw corruption, emerge triumphant

* Pſalm xxii. 6.

† This, and ſeveral other hints, interſperſed in this work, refer to the *active* and *paſſive* righteouſneſs of CHRIST, *imputed* to believers, for their juſtification. Which, in the opinion of many great expoſitors, is the myſtical and the moſt ſublime meaning of the *wedding garment*, ſo emphatically and forcibly recommended by the teacher ſent from GOD, *Matt.* xxii. 11. A doctrine, which ſome of thoſe, who honour my Meditations with a peruſal, probably may not receive with much, if any, approbation. I hope, the whole performance will not be caſhiered, for *one* difference in ſentiment. And I beg, that the ſentiment itſelf may not haſtily be rejected, without a ſerious hearing. For, I have the pleaſure of being intimately acquainted with a gentleman of good learning, and diſtinguiſhed ſenſe, who had *once* as ſtrong prepoſſeſſions *againſt* this tenet, as can well be imagined. Yet *now*, he not only admits it, as a truth; but embraces it, as the joy of his heart; and cleaves to it, as the rock of his hopes.

A clear and cogent treatiſe, intitled *Submiſſion to the Righteouſneſs of* GOD, was the inſtrument of removing his prejudices, and reducing him to a better judgment.—In which he has been happily confirmed by the authority of the moſt *illuſtrious* names, and the works of the moſt *eminent* pens, that have ever adorned our church and nation. In this number are—Biſhop *Jewel*, one of our great reformers; and the other venerable compilers of our Homilies—Archbiſhop *Uſher*, that oracle of univerſal learning—Biſhop *Hall*, the devout and ſprightly orator of his age—the copious and fervent Biſhop *Hopkins*—the ſingularly good and unaffected Biſhop *Beveridge*—that everlaſting honour

umphant from the grave; and not only mount the lower firmament, but aſcend the heaven of heavens; taking poſſeſſion of thoſe ſublime abodes, in our name, and as our forerunner?

Ye *cattle*, that reſt in your incloſed paſtures; ye *beaſts*, that range the unlimited foreſt; ye *fiſh*, that rove through trackleſs paths of the ſea. *Sheep*, clad in garments, which when left by you, are wore by kings. *Kine*, who feed on verdure, which, tranſmuted in your bodies, and ſtrained from your udders, furniſhes a repaſt for queens. *Lions*, roaring after your prey; *Leviathan*, taking your paſtime in the great deep; with all that wing the firmament, or tread the ſoil, or ſwim the wave.—He, who ſpreads his ever-hoſpitable board; who admits you all to be his continual gueſts; and ſuffers you to want no manner of thing that is good.—HE was deſtitute, afflicted, tormented: he endured all that was miſerable and reproach-

Q ful;

honour of the bench of judicature, Lord Chief Juſtice *Hales*—the nervous, florid, and perſuaſive Dean *Stanhope*—the practical and perſpicuous Mr. *Burkit*—and, to ſummon no other evidence, that *matchleſs* genius *Milton*; who, in various parts of his divine poem, inculcates this *comfortable* truth; and, in *one* paſſage, repreſents it under the very ſame image, which is made uſe of above, *Book* X. *l.* 222.

I had almoſt forgot to mention that the treatiſe intitled *Submiſſion*, &c. was written by Mr. *Benjamin Jenks*.—Whoſe Book of *Devotions* has deſervedly paſſed through *eleven* editions; is truly admirable for the ſublimity, ſpirituality, and propriety of the ſentiments; as well as for the conciſe form, and pathetic turn of the expreſſion.—Whoſe Book of *Meditations*, though no leſs worthy of general acceptance, has, for a conſiderable time, been almoſt unknown and extinct. But is now revived, and is lately republiſhed, in two octavo volumes, by Mr. *James Rivington*. For which ſervice, he has my thanks: I flatter myſelf, he will have the thanks of the public: as I am perſuaded, could religion and virtue ſpeak, he would have *their* acknowledgments alſo. Since few treatiſes are more happily calculated, to repreſent religion in it's native beauty, and to promote the intereſts of genuine virtue.—On which account, I truſt, the *candid* will excuſe me, and the *judicious* will not condemn me, even though the recommendation of thoſe Devotions and of theſe Meditations, may appear to be a digreſſion from my ſubject.

N. B. *Should the reader be inclined to examine the afore-mentioned tenet, he will find it ſtated, diſcuſſed, and applied to it's due improvement, in a piece intitled* THERON *and* ASPASIO.

ful; in order to exalt a degenerate race, who had debaſed themſelves to a level with the beaſts that periſh, unto ſeats of diſtinguiſhed and immortal honour; in order to introduce the ſlaves of ſin, and heirs of hell, into manſions of conſummate and everlaſting bliſs.

Surely, the contemplation of ſuch a ſubject, and the diſtant anticipation of ſuch a hope, may almoſt turn earth into heaven, and make even inanimate nature vocal with praiſe. Let it, then, break forth from every creature. Let the *meaneſt* feel the inſpiring impulſe; let the *greateſt* acknowledge themſelves unable, worthily to expreſs the ſtupendous goodneſs.

Praiſe HIM, ye *inſects* that crawl on the ground; who, though high above all height, humbled himſelf to dwell in duſt. *Birds* of the air, waft on your wings, and warble in your notes HIS praiſe; who, though LORD of the celeſtial abodes, while ſojourning on earth, wanted a ſhelter commodious as your neſts.—Ye rougher world of *brutes*, join with the gentle ſongſters of the ſhade, and howl to HIM your hoarſe applauſe; who breaks the jaw-bones of the infernal lion; who ſoftens into mildneſs the ſavage diſpoſition; and bids the wolf lie down, in amicable agreement, with the lamb. *Bleat* out, ye hills; let broader *lows* be reſponſive from the vales; ye foreſts catch, and ye rocks retain, the inarticulate hymn; becauſe MESSIAH the Prince *feeds his flock, like a ſhepherd. He gathers the lambs with his arm; he carries them in his boſom; and gently leads thoſe that are with young* *.—Wave, ye ſtately *cedars*, in ſign of worſhip, wave your branching heads to HIM; who meekly bowed his own, on the accurſed tree. Pleaſing *proſpects*, ſcenes of beauty, where niceſt art conſpires with laviſh nature, to form a paradiſe below; lay forth all your charms, and in all your charms confeſs yourſelves a mere blank; compared with his amiableneſs, who

* Iſa. xl. 11.

who is "faireſt among ten thouſand, and altogether "lovely."—Drop down, ye *ſhowers*; and teſtify, as you fall; teſtify of HIS grace, which deſcends more copiouſly than the rain, diſtils more ſweetly than the dew. Let ſighing *gales* breathe, and murmuring *rivulets* flow; breathe and flow, in harmonious conſonance to HIM; whoſe Spirit is far more reviving, than the cooling breeze; who is himſelf the Fountain of living waters.

Ye *lightnings*, blaze HIS honour; ye *thunders*, ſound HIS praiſe; while reverberating *clouds* return the roar, and bellowing *oceans* propagate the tremendous anthem.—*Muteſt* of creatures, add your ſilent oratory, and diſplay the triumphs of HIS meekneſs; who, though he maketh the clouds his chariot, and treadeth upon the waves of the ſea; though the thunder is his voice, and the lightning his ſword of juſtice; yet, amidſt the moſt abuſive and cruel injuries, was ſubmiſſive and lifted not his hand, was "dumb and opened not his mouth."—Great *ſource of day*, addreſs thy radiant homage to a far ſublimer Sun. Write, in all thy ample round, with every lucid beam, O! write a teſtimony to HIM, who is the brightneſs of his Father's glory. Who is the Sun of righteouſneſs to a ſinful world; and is riſen, never to go down; is riſen, to be our everlaſting light.—Shine clear, ye *ſkies*; look gay, thou *earth*; let the *floods* clap their hands, and let *every* creature wear a ſmile: for he cometh, the CREATOR himſelf cometh, to be manifeſted in the fleſh; and with him comes pardon, peace, and joy; every virtue and all felicity comes in his train.—*Angels* and *archangels*, let your ſongs be of JESUS, and teach the very heavens to echo with his adored and maſeſtic name. Ye beheld him, with greater tranſports of admiration, when you attended his agony in the garden, and ſaw him proſtrate on the ground; than when you beheld univerſal nature riſing at his call, and ſaw the wonders of his creating might. Tune to loftieſt notes your golden harps, and waken raptures, unknown

before even in heavenly breaſts: while all that has *breath*, ſwells the concert of harmony; and all that has *being*, unites in the tribute of praiſe.

Chiefly, let *man* exalt his voice; let man, with diſtinguiſhed hoſannas, hail the REDEEMER. For man, he was ſtretched on the racking croſs; for man, he was conſigned to the gloomy ſepulchre; for man, he procured grace unmeaſurable, and bliſs inconceivable.—However *different*, therefore, in your age, or more different in your circumſtances, be *unanimous*, O Men, in magnifying a Saviour, who is no reſpecter of perſons; who gave himſelf a ranſom for all.—Bend, ye *kings*, from your thrones of ivory and gold; in your robes of imperial purple, fall proſtrate at HIS feet; who forſook a nobler throne, and laid aſide more illuſtrious enſigns of majeſty; that you might reign with GOD for ever and ever.—*Children* of *poverty*, meaneſt of mortals (if any can be called poor, who are *thus* enriched; if any can be accounted mean, who are *thus* ennobled); rejoice, greatly rejoice, in GOD your Saviour. Who choſe to be indigent, was willing to be contemned; that you might be intitled to the treaſures, and be numbered with the princes, of heaven.—*Sons* of *affliction*, though haraſſed with pain, and inured to anguiſh, O! change your groans into ſongs of gratitude. Let no complaining voice, no jarring ſtring be heard, in the univerſal ſymphony; but *glorify* the LAMB even *in the fires**. Who himſelf, bore greater torment, than you feel; and has promiſed you a ſhare in the joy, which he inherits: who has made your ſufferings ſhort, and will make your reſt eternal.—*Men* of *hoary locks*, bending beneath a weight of years, and tottering on the brink of the grave; let CHRIST be your ſupport, under all infirmities; lean upon CHRIST, as the rock of your ſalvation. Let his name, his precious name, form the laſt accents, which quiver on your pale expiring lips.—And let this be the firſt,

* Iſa. xxiv. 15.

firſt, that liſps on your tongues, ye tender *infants*. Remember your REDEEMER, in your earlieſt moments. Devote the choice of your hours, to the learning of his will; and the chief of your ſtrength, to the glorifying of HIS name. Who, in the perfection of health, and the very prime of manhood, was content to become a motionleſs and ghaſtly corpſe; that you might be girt with the vigour, and cloathed with the bloom, of eternal youth.

Ye *ſpirits* of *juſt* men made *perfect*, who are releaſed from the burden of the fleſh; and freed from all the vexatious ſolicitations of corruption in yourſelves; delivered from all the injurious effects of iniquity in others. Who ſojourn no longer in the tents of ſtrife, or the territories of diſorder; but are received into that pure, harmonious, holy ſociety, where every one acts up to his amiable and exalted character; where GOD himſelf is pleaſed *graciouſly* and *immediately* to preſide.—You find, not without pleaſing aſtoniſhment, your hopes improved into actual enjoyment, and your faith ſuperſeded by the beatific viſion. You feel all your former ſhyneſs of behaviour, happily loſt in the overflowings of unbounded love: and all your little differences of opinion, intirely bore down by tides of invariable truth. Bleſs, therefore, with all your inlarged powers, bleſs *his* infinitely larger goodneſs; who, when he had overcome the ſharpneſs of death, opened the gates of paradiſe, opened the kingdom of heaven to all generations, and to every denomination of the faithful.

Ye men of *holy* converſation, and *humble* tempers, think of HIM, who *loved you, and waſhed you from your ſins in his own blood*. Think of him, on your ſilent couch; talk of him, in every ſocial interview. Glory in his excellencies; make your boaſt of his obedience; and add, ſtill continue to add, the incenſe of a dutiful life, to all the oblations of a grateful tongue.—*Weakeſt of believers*, who go mourning under a ſenſe of guilt,

and conflicting with the ceaſeleſs aſſaults of temptation; put off your ſack-cloth, and be girded with gladneſs. Becauſe JESUS, is as merciful to hear, as he is mighty to help. Becauſe, he is touched with the tendereſt ſympathizing concern, for all your diſtreſſes; and he lives, ever lives, to be your *advocate* with the FATHER. Why then ſhould uneaſy doubts ſadden your countenances? Why ſhould deſponding fears oppreſs your ſouls? Turn, turn thoſe diſconſolate ſighs into chearful hymns; ſince you have his *powerful interceſſion*, and his *ineſtimable merits*, to be your anchor in all tribulations, to be your paſſport into eternal bleſſedneſs.

Moſt of all, ye *miniſters* of the *ſanctuary*; heralds commiſſioned from above; lift, every one, his voice like a trumpet, and loudly proclaim the REDEEMER. Get ye up, ye ambaſſadors of peace, get ye up into the high mountains; and ſpread far and wide the honours of the LAMB, "that was ſlain, but is alive for evermore." Teach every ſacred roof, to reſound with his fame; and every human heart to glow with his love. Declare, as far as the force of words will go, declare the inexhauſtible fulneſs of that great atonement; whoſe merits are commenſurate with the glories of the DIVINITY*. Tell the ſinful wretch, what pity yearns in IMMANUEL's

* If in this place and others, I have ſpoken magnificently of the blood of CHRIST, and it's inſuperable efficacy to expiate guilt; I think, it is no more than is expreſſed, in a very celebrated Hymn; written by one of the greateſt *wits*, who had alſo been one of the greateſt *libertines*, and afterwards commenced one of the moſt remarkable *penitents*, in *France*. A Hymn, which even Mr. *Bayle*, confeſſes to be a *very fine* one; which another great critic calls an *admirable* one; and which, a genius ſuperior to them both, recommends as a *noble* one. (See *Spect.* Vol. VII. No. 513.)

The author, having acknowledged his crimes to be, beyond meaſure heinous, and almoſt beyond forgiveneſs provoking:—ſo provoking, as to render tears from ſuch eyes offenſive, and prayers from ſuch lips abominable:—compoſes himſelf to ſubmit, without the leaſt repining ſentiment; to ſubmit, even with praiſe and adoration, to the

L's bowels; what blood he has ſpilt, what agonies he has endured, what wonders he has wrought, for the ſalvation of his enemies. Invite the indigent, to become rich; intreat the guilty, to accept of pardon; becauſe, with the crucified JESUS is plenteous redemption, and all-ſufficiency to ſave.—While you, placed in conſpicuous ſtations, pour the joyful ſound; may I, as I ſteal through the vale of humble life, catch the pleaſing accents! For *me*, the Author of all bleſſings became a curſe: for *me*, his bones were diſlocated, and his fleſh was torn: he hung, with ſtreaming veins, and an agonizing ſoul, on the croſs for *me*. O! may I, in my little ſphere, and amidſt the ſcanty circle of my acquaintance, at leaſt whiſper theſe glad tranſporting tidings; whiſper them from my own heart, that they may ſurely reach, and ſweetly penetrate theirs.

But, when men and angels raiſe the grand hymn; when all worlds, and all beings, add their *collective* acclamations; this full, fervent, and univerſal chorus, will be ſo *inferior* to the riches of the REDEEMER'S grace; ſo *diſproportionate* to the magnificence of his glory; that it will ſeem but to *debaſe* the unutterable ſubject, it attempts to exalt. The loud hallelujah will *die away*, in the ſolemn mental eloquence of proſtrate, rapturous, *ſilent* adoration.

O goodneſs infinite! Goodneſs immenſe!
And *love that paſſeth knowledge*!—Words are vain;
Language is loſt in wonders ſo divine.
"Come then, expreſſive SILENCE, muſe his praiſe."

oſt dreadful doom. Accordingly, he ſtands in reſigned expectation being inſtantly ſtruck by the bolts of vengeance: but—with a turn thought equally ſurpriſing and ſprightly; with a faith properly ounded, and happily firm; he adds,

Yet where! O where! *can* ev'n thy thunders fall!
CHRIST'S blood o'erſpreads and ſhields me from them *all*.

CONTEMPLATIONS

ON THE

NIGHT.

Night *is fair* virtue's *immemorial friend:*
The conſcious moon, *through ev'ry diſtant age,*
Has held a lamp to wiſdom.

Night Thoughts, No. V.

THE FRONTISPIECE

Exhibits a view of the nocturnal heavens.—On the top of an OBSERVATORY, two perſons examine the celeſtial bodies with their teleſcopes: inſtruments which gave riſe to the moſt important improvements in the ſcience of Aſtronomy.

An aged philoſopher is repreſented, inſtructing his pupils. He deſcribes, with his compaſſes, the order and courſes of the planets; according to the Newtonian hypotheſis, intimated by a book bearing that great author's name.—The whole tenour of the lecture, in concert with the whole ſtructure and œconomy of the ſkies, ENARRANT GLORIAM DEI, profeſſedly "declare "the glory of GOD".—Behind the philoſopher ſtands one of his ſcholars, with an air of cloſe attention, computing on his fingers the diſtances, the magnitudes, the velocities of the planetary orbs.—Another at his right-hand, attending to the deſcription of the ſtupendous ſyſtem, is ſtruck with ſurprize, and impreſſed with awe.—A third, with conſcious humiliation in his countenance, holds a ſcroll, inſcribed with a diagram; expreſſing the joint action of the centrifugal and centripetal forces. As by the one the planets are continually endeavouring to fly off; but by the other, are perpetually drawn towards the centre of their motion. SIC GRATIA DEI, "Such is the operation of divine grace: "correcting the irregular impulſe of our natural depravity; determining our deſires to the centre of happineſs; and directing our goings in the circle of duty.—A youth on the left, overwhelmed with veneration for the Almighty Maker, in a tranſport of gratitude, and a poſture of adoration, pours out his ſoul in thoſe emphatical words; "When I conſider thy heavens, the work of thy "fingers, the moon and the ſtars which thou haſt ordained:— "LORD, what is man, that thou art mindful of him; and the "ſon of man, that thou viſiteſt him?" *Pſal.* viii. 3, 4.

CON

TO

PAUL ORCHARD, Eſq;

OF

Stoke-Abbey, in *Devonſhire*.

Dear SIR,

AS your honoured father was pleaſed to make choice of me, to anſwer in your name at the ont, and to exerciſe a ſort of *guardianſhip* over your piritual intereſts; permit me, by putting theſe lit-le treatiſes into your hand, to fulfil ſome part of hat ſolemn obligation.

Gratitude for many ſignal favours, and a conſci-ntious regard to my ſacred engagement, have long go inſpired my breaſt with the warmeſt wiſhes, both or your true *dignity*, and real *happineſs*. Nor can think of a more endearing, or a more effectual ay, of advancing either the one or the other, than o ſet before you a ſketch of your excellent *father*'s haracter.—Illuſtrious examples are the moſt win-ing incitements to virtue. And none can come tended with ſuch particular recommendations to ou, Sir, as the pattern of that worthy perſon, om whom you derive your very being.

A moſt cordial, and reverential eſteem for the *ine word*, was one of his remarkable qualities. hoſe oracles of heaven were his principal delight, nd his inſeparable companions. Your gardens, our ſolitary walks, and the hedges of your fields

can

can witneſs *, with what an unwearied aſſiduity h
exerciſed himſelf in the law of the LORD. Fro
hence, he fetched his maxims of wiſdom, and form
ed his judgment of things. The ſacred *precept*
were the model of his temper, and the guide of hi
life; while the precious *promiſes*, were the joy of hi
heart, and his portion for ever.

Improving company was another of his moſt reliſh
ing pleaſures. Few gentlemen were better furniſh
ed, either with richneſs of fancy, or copiouſneſs o
expreſſion, to bear a ſhining part in converſation
With theſe talents, he always endeavoured to giv
ſome *uſeful*, generally ſome *religious*, turn to the di
courſe. Nor did he ever reflect, with greater com
placency, on his ſocial hours, than when they tend
ed to glorify the Eternal Majeſty; and to awake
in himſelf and others, a more lively ſpirit of devo
tion.

To project for the good of others, was his fre
quent *ſtudy*; and to carry thoſe benevolent contri
vances into execution, his favourite *employ*. Whe
viſited by the young perſons of the neighbourhood
far from taking an ungraceful pride to initiate the
in a debauchery, or confirm them in a riotous ha
bit; it was his inceſſant aim, by finely-adapted per
ſuaſives, to encourage them in *induſtry*, and eſtabli
them in a courſe of *ſobriety*; to *guard* them again
the allurements of vice, and *animate* them with th
principles of piety. A noble kind of hoſpitalit
this! Which will probably tranſmit it's benefici
influence to their earthly poſſeſſions; to their futu
families; and even to their everlaſting ſtate.

A co

* Joſh. xxiv. 27.

A conviction of human indigence, and a thorough perſuaſion of the divine all-ſufficiency, induced him to be *frequent in prayer*. To proſtrate himſelf, in profound adoration, before that infinitely exalted Being, who dwells in light inacceſſible, was *his glory*; to implore the continuance of the almighty favour, and the increaſe of all chriſtian graces, was *his gain*. In thoſe moments, no doubt, he remembered You, Sir, with a particular earneſtneſs; and lodged many an ardent petition in the court of heaven, for his infant ſon. Ceaſe not to ſecond them with your own devout ſupplications, that they may deſcend upon your head, "in the fulneſs of the "bleſſings of the goſpel of peace."

To give their genuine luſtre to all his other endowments, he was careful to maintain an *humble mind*. Though his friends might admire his ſuperior abilities, or his acquaintance applaud his exemplary behaviour, he ſaw how far he *fell ſhort* of the mark of his high calling: ſaw, and lamented his defects: ſaw, and renounced himſelf: relying, for final acceptance, and endleſs felicity, on a *better righteouſneſs* than his own; even on the tranſcendently perfect righteouſneſs, and inconceivably precious death, of JESUS the Redeemer. This was the rock of his hope, and the very crown of his rejoicing.

Theſe, Sir, are ſome of the *diſtinguiſhing* characteriſtics of your deceaſed parent. As you had the misfortune to loſe ſo valuable a relative, before you was capable of forming any acquaintance with his perſon; I flatter myſelf, you will the more attentively obſerve his picture. This his *moral picture*; deſigned, not to be ſet in gold, or ſparkle in enamel,

but to breathe in your ſpirit, and to live in all your conduct.—Which, though it be intirely your own, calculated purely for yourſelf, may poſſibly (like family pieces in your parlour, that glance an eye upon as many as enter the room) make ſome *pleaſing* and *uſeful* impreſſion on every beholder.—May every one, charmed with the beautiful image, catch it's reſemblance; and each, in his reſpective ſphere, "go and do likewiſe."

But You, Sir, are peculiarly concerned to copy the amiable original. As the order of an indulgent providence, has made you heir of the *affluent circumſtances*; let not a gay and thoughtleſs inadvertence, cut you off from the *richer inheritance* of theſe noble qualifications.—Theſe will be your ſecurity, amidſt all the glittering dangers; which are inſeparable from blooming years, and an elevated ſituation in life. Theſe are your path, your ſure and only path, to true greatneſs, and ſolid happineſs.—Tread in theſe ſteps, and you cannot fail to be the darling of your friends, and the favourite of heaven. Tread in theſe ſteps, and you will give inexpreſſible joy to one of the beſt of mothers; you will become an extenſive bleſſing to your fellow-creatures; and which, after ſuch moſt engaging motives, is ſcarce worthy to be mentioned, you will be the delight, the honour, and the boaſt of,

Dear SIR,

Your very affectionate godfather,

And moſt faithful humble ſervant,

JAMES HERVEY.

Weſton-Favell, near Northampton,
July 14, 1747.

PREFACE.

WE have already exerciſed our ſpeculations, on the tombs and flowers; ſurveying nature, covered with the deepeſt horrors, and arrayed in the richeſt beauties. Allegory *taught many of the objects, to ſpeak the language of virtue; while* imagination *lent her colouring, to give the leſſons an engaging air.—And this with a view of imitating that* divine *inſtructor; who commiſſioned the* lily *, *in her ſilver ſuit, to remonſtrate in the ear of unbelieving reaſon: who ſent his diſciples (men ordained to* teach *the univerſe) to* learn *maxims of the laſt importance, from the moſt inſignificant* birds *, *that wander through the paths of the air; from the very* meaneſt *herbs *, that are ſcattered over the face of the ground* †.

* Matt. vi. 26, 28, 29, 30.

† Celebrated writers, as *Demoſthenes* and *Cicero*, *Thucydides* and *Livy*, are obſerved to have a ſtile peculiar to themſelves.—Now, whoever conſiders the diſcourſes of *Chriſt*, will find him diſtinguiſhing himſelf by a ſtile, which may properly be called *HIS OWN*. Majeſtic, yet familiar; happily uniting dignity with condeſcenſion; it conſiſts, in teaching his followers the *ſublimeſt* truths, by ſpiritualizing on the moſt *common* occurrences. Which, beſides it's being level to the loweſt apprehenſions; and admirably adapted to ſteal into the moſt inattentive heart; is accompanied with this very ſingular advantage, That it turns even the *ſphere of buſineſs* into a *ſchool of inſtruction*; and renders the moſt ordinary objects a ſet of monitors, ever ſoliciting our regard, becauſe ever preſent to our ſenſes.—So that, I believe, it may be ſaid of this *amiable method*, in which our LORD conveyed; as well as of that *powerful energy*, which attended his doctrines, That *never man ſpake like this man*.—The *harveſt* approaching, he reminds his diſciples of a far more important harveſt, *John* v. 35. *Matt.* xiii. 39. when immortal beings ſhall be *reaped* from the grave, and *gathered in* from all the quarters of the earth: when every human creature ſhall ſuſtain the character of valuable *wheat*,

Emboldened by the kind acceptance of the preceding ſketches, I beg leave to confide in the ſame benevolence *of* taſte, *for the protection and ſupport of the two remaining eſſays; which exhibit a proſpect of* ſtill life, *and* grand operation: *which moralize on the moſt compoſed, and moſt magnificent, appearances of things.—In which* fancy *is again ſuffered to introduce her imagery; but only as the handmaid of* truth: *in order to dreſs her perſon, and diſplay her charms; to engage the attention, and win the love, even of the* gay, *and of the* faſhionable. *Which is more likely to be effected, by forming agreeable pictures of nature, and deriving inſtructive obſervations; than by the laborious method of long-deduced arguments, or cloſe-connected reaſonings.—The contemplation of the heavens and the earth, of their admirable properties and beneficial changes, has always afforded the moſt exalted gratification to the human mind. In compliance with this prevailing taſte, I have drawn my ſerious admonitions from the ſtupendous theatre, and variegated ſcenery, of the univerſe. That the reader may learn his duty, from his very pleaſures—may gather* wiſdom, *mingled with* virtue, *from the moſt refined* entertainments, *and nobleſt* delights.

The evening, *drawing her ſables over the* world, *and gently darkening into* night, *is a ſeaſon peculiarly proper for ſedate conſideration. All circumſtances concur,*

or deſpicable *tares*; and accordingly be lodged in manſions of everlaſting ſecurity, or conſigned over to the rage of unquenchable fire.—In his charge to *fiſhermen*, when they are commencing preachers, *Matt.* iv. 19. He exhorts them, conformably to the nature of their late occupation, to uſe the ſame *aſſiduity* and *addreſs* in winning ſouls, as they were wont to exerciſe in catching the finny prey.—For the farther illuſtration of this no leſs uſeful, than curious ſubject, I would refer my reader to a valuable note, in Sir *Iſaac Newton*'s Obſervations on the Prophecies; p. 148. 4to edition.

ear, to hush our passions, and sooth our cares; to tempt our steps abroad, and prompt our thoughts to serious reflection.

— — — Then is the time,
For those, whom wisdom, and whom nature charm,
To steal themselves from the degen'rate croud,
And soar above this little scene of things;
To tread low-thoughted vice beneath their feet;
To sooth the throbbing passions into peace;
And woo lone quiet in her silent walks *.

The favour I would solicit for the first *of the following compositions, is, that it may be permitted to attend, in such retired and contemplative excursions. To attend, if not under the character of a friend; at least, in the humble capacity of a servant, or a page:—as a* servant, *to open the door of meditation, and remove every impediment to those best exercises of the mind; which blend advantage with amusement, and improve, while they delight:—as a* page, *to gather up the unstable, fluctuating train of fancy; and collect her fickle powers, into a consistent, regular, and useful habit of thinking.*

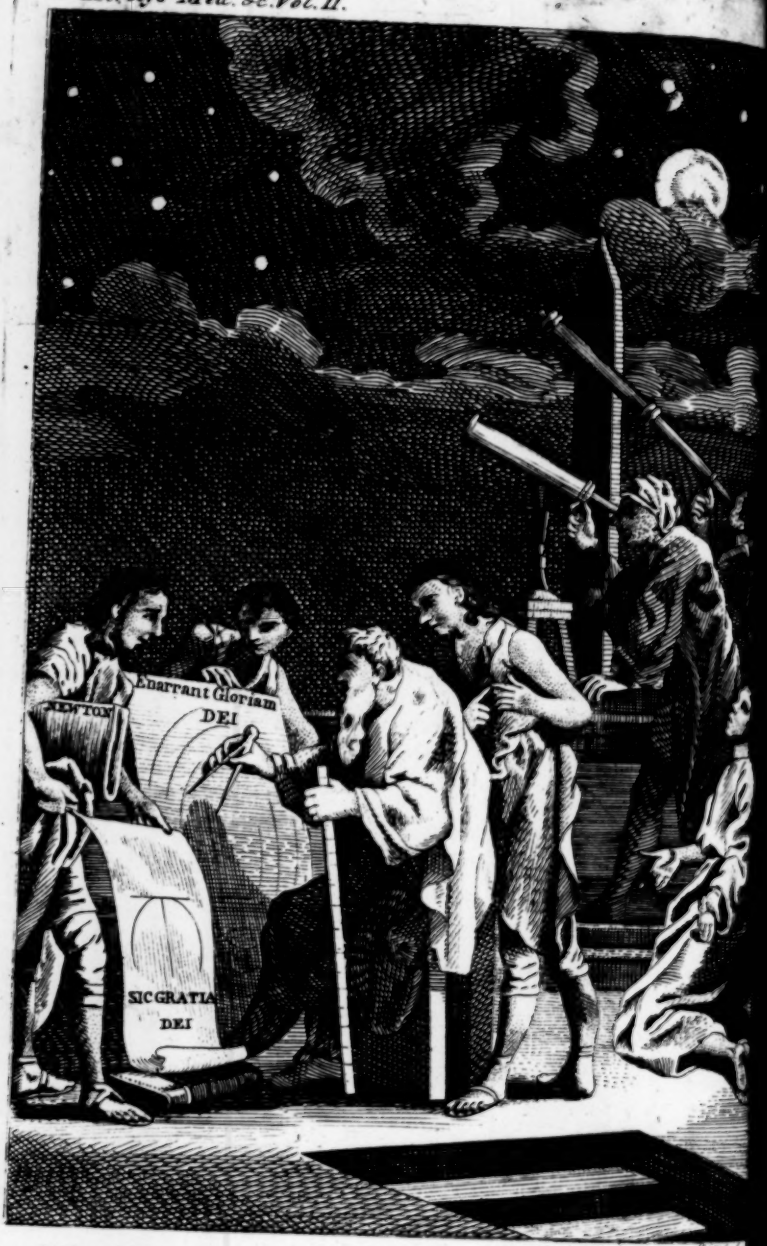
The other, *conversant among the* starry regions, *would lead the imagination through those beautiful tracts of unclouded azure; and point out to the judgment some of those astonishing particulars, which so eminently signalize the celestial worlds. A prospect this, to which curiosity attracts our eyes, and to which scripture itself often directs our study. A prospect beyond all others most excellently calculated, to* enlarge *the soul, and* enoble *it's conceptions;—to give the grandest apprehensions*

* Thomps. Autumn, l. 973. last edit.

of the everlaſting *GOD, and create ſentiments of becoming ſuperiority, with relation to all* tranſitory *intereſt;—in a word, to furniſh* faith *with the ſureſt foundation, for a ſteady affiance, and true magnanimity of ſpirit; to afford* piety *the ſtrongeſt motives, both for a lively gratitude, and profound veneration.*

While Galilæo *lifts his tube, and diſcovers the prodigious magnitude of thoſe radiant orbs;—while* Newton *meaſures their amazing diſtances, and unites the whole ſyſtem, in harmonious order, by the ſubtle influences of attraction:—I would only, like the herald before that illuſtrious* Hebrew *, *proclaim at every turn,* "Bow the knee, *and adore the Almighty Maker;* "*magnify his eternal name,* and make his praiſe, "*like all his works,* to be glorious."

* Gen. xli. 43.



When I conſider thy Heavens, the Work of thy Fingers: the Moon, and the Stars which thou haſt ordained, Lord what is Man that thou art mindful of him, and the Son of Man that thou viſiteſt him!

Pſalm VIII. 3 & 4.

CONTEMPLATIONS

ON

THE NIGHT.

THE buſineſs of the day diſpatched, and the ſultry heats abated, invited me to the recreation of a walk. A walk, in one of the *neſt receſſes* of the country; and in one of the moſt *plea-ant evenings*, which the ſummer-ſeaſon produced.

The limes and elms, uniting their branches over my ead, formed a *verdant canopy*, and caſt a moſt refreſh-ng ſhade. Under my feet lay a *carpet* of nature's *vel-et*; graſs intermingled with moſs, and embroidered ith flowers. Jeſſamines, in conjunction with wood-ines, twined around the trees; diſplaying their *artleſs eauties* to the eye, and diffuſing their *delicious ſweets* hrough the air. On either ſide, the boughs, rounded nto a ſet of regular arches, opened a view into the *diſ-an fields*, and preſented me with a proſpect of the *bend-ng ſkies*. The little birds, all joyous and grateful for the favours of the light, were paying their acknowledg-ments in a *tribute* of *harmony*, and ſoothing themſelves

to

to reſt with ſongs. While a French-horn, from a neighbouring ſeat, ſent it's melodious accents, ſoftened by the length of their paſſage, to complete the *concert* of the *grove*.

Roving in this agreeable manner, my thoughts were exerciſed on a ſubject, ſtill more agreeable than the ſeaſon, or the ſcene. I mean, our late *ſignal victory*, over the united forces of inteſtine treaſon, and foreign invaſion. A victory, which pours joy through the preſent age, and will tranſmit it's influence to generations yet unborn.—Are not all the bleſſings, which can endear ſociety, or render life itſelf deſirable, centred in our preſent happy conſtitution, and auſpicious government? Were they not *all* ſtruck at, by that impious and horrid blow, meditated at *Rome*; levelled by *France*; and ſeconded by factious ſpirits at *home*? Who then can be ſufficiently thankful, for the gracious interpoſition of providence; which has not only averted the impending ruin, but turned it, with aggravated confuſion, on the authors of our troubles?

Methinks, every thing *valuable*, which I poſſeſs; every thing *charming*, which I behold; conſpire to enhance this ever-memorable event. To this it is owing, that I can ramble unmoleſted along the vale of private life, and taſte all the innocent ſatisfactions of a *contemplative* retirement.—Had rebellion* ſucceeded in her deteſtable deſigns; inſtead of walking with ſecurity and complacence in theſe flowery paths, I might have met the *aſſaſſin* with his *dagger*: or have been obliged to abandon my habitation, and "embrace the rock for a "ſhelter."—Farewel then, ye fragrant ſhades; ſeats of meditation, and calm repoſe! I ſhould have been driven from your loved retreats, to make way for ſome barba-

rous,

* Referring to the rebellion, ſet on foot in the year 1745—Which, for ſeveral months, made a very alarming progreſs in the North—but was happily extinguiſhed by the glorious and decifive victory at *Culloden*.

rous, ſome *inſulting victor*.—Farewel then, ye pleaſing toils, and wholeſome amuſements of my rural hours! I ſhould no more have reared the tender flower to the ſun; no more have taught the eſpalier to expand her boughs; nor have fetched, any longer, from my kitchen-garden, the pureſt ſupplies of health.

Had rebellion ſucceeded in her deteſtable deſigns; inſtead of being regaled with the *muſic* of the *woods*, I might have been alarmed with the ſound of the trumpet, and all the thunder of war. Inſtead of being entertained with this *beautiful landſcape*, I might have beheld our houſes ranſacked, and our villages plundered; I might have beheld our fenced cities encompaſſed with armies, and our fruitful fields "cloathed with deſolation;" or have been ſhocked with the more frightful images of "garments rolled in blood," and of a ruffian's blade reeking from a brother's heart. Inſtead of peace, with her chearing olives, ſheltering our abodes; inſtead of juſtice, with her impartial ſcale, ſecuring our goods; *perſecution* had brandiſhed her ſword, and *ſlavery* clanked her chains.

Nor are theſe miſeries imaginary only, or the creatures of a groundleſs panic. There are, in a neighbouring kingdom, who very lately experienced them in all their rigour*. And, if the *malignant* ſpirit of *popery* had forced itſelf into our church; if an *abjured pretender*, had cut his way to our throne; we could have no reaſon to expect a mitigation of their ſeverity, on our behalf.—But, ſuppoſing the tender mercies of a bigotted uſurper, to have been ſomewhat leſs cruel. Where, alas! would have been the encouragement, to cultivate our little portion; or what pleaſure could ariſe, from an improved

* See a pamphlet intitled, *Popery always the ſame*.—Which contains a narrative of the *perſecutions*, and ſevere hardſhips, lately ſuffered by the *Proteſtants*, in the ſouthern parts of *France*; and cloſes with a moſt ſeaſonable, alarming, and ſpirited addreſs to the inhabitants of *Great-Britain*. Printed 1746. Price 8*d*.

improved ſpot; if both the one and the other lay, every moment, at the mercy of *lawleſs* power? This imbittering circumſtance would ſpoil their reliſh; and by rendering them a *precarious*, would render them a *joyleſs* acquiſition.—In vain, might the vine ſpread her purple cluſters; in vain, be laviſh of her generous juices; if *tyranny*, like a ravenous harpy, ſhould be always hovering over the bowl, and ready to ſnatch it from the lip of induſtry, or to reſt it from the hand of liberty.

Liberty, that deareſt of names; and *property*, that beſt of charters; give an additional, an inexpreſſible charm to every delightful object.—See, how the declining ſun has beautified the *weſtern clouds*; has arrayed them in crimſon, and ſkirted them with gold. Such a refinement of our domeſtic bliſs, is property; ſuch an improvement of our public privileges, is liberty.—When the lamp of day ſhall withdraw his beams, there will ſtill remain the ſame collection of floating vapours; but O how changed, how gloomy! The carnation-ſtreaks are faded; the golden edgings are wore away; and all the lovely tinges are loſt, in a *leaden coloured louring* ſadneſs. *Such* would be the aſpect, of all theſe ſcenes of beauty and all theſe abodes of pleaſure; if expoſed continually to the caprice of arbitrary ſway, or held in a ſtate of abject and cringing dependence.

The ſun has almoſt finiſhed his daily race, and haſtens to the goal. He deſcends lower and lower; till his chariot-wheels ſeem to hover on the utmoſt verge of the ſky. What is ſomewhat remarkable, the orb of light, upon the point of ſetting, grows conſiderably *broader*. The ſhadows of objects, juſt before they become blended in undiſtinguiſhable darkneſs, are exceedingly *lengthened**.—Like bleſſings, little prized while *poſſeſſed*: but highly eſteemed, the very inſtant they

* *Majoreſque cadunt altis de Montibus Umbræ.* VIRG.

they are preparing for their flight: bitterly regretted, when once they are gone, and to be ſeen no more.

The radiant globe is, now, half-immerſed beneath the duſky earth. Or, as the ancient poets ſpeak, is ſhooting into the ocean, and ſinks in the weſtern ſea.—And could I view the *ſea*, at this juncture, it would yield a moſt amuſing and curious ſpectacle. The rays, ſtriking horizontally on the liquid element, give it the appearance of floating glaſs; or, reflected in many a different direction, form a beautiful multiplicity of colours.—A ſtranger, as he walks along the ſandy beach; and, loſt in penſive attention, liſtens to the murmurings of the reſtleſs flood; is agreeably alarmed by the *gay decorations* of the ſurface. With entertainment, and with wonder, he ſees the curling waves, here gliſtering with white, there glowing with purple; in one place, wearing an azure tincture; in another, glancing a caſt of undulating green; in the whole, exhibiting a piece of *liquid ſcenery*, that may vie with yonder penſile tapeſtries, though wrought in the loom, and tinged with the dies of heaven.

While I am tranſported by fancy to the ſhores of the ocean, the great luminary is ſunk beneath the horizon, and totally diſappears. The whole face of the ground is overſpread with ſhades; or with, what one of the fineſt painters of nature calls, a *dun obſcurity*. Only a few very ſuperior eminences are tipt with ſtreaming ſilver. The tops of groves, and lofty towers, catch the *laſt ſmiles* of day*; are ſtill irradiated by the departing beams.—But, O! how tranſient is the diſtinction! how momentary the gift! Like all the bleſſings, which mortals enjoy below, it is *gone*, almoſt as ſoon as *granted*. See! how languiſhingly it trembles on the leafy ſpire; and

* See this remarkable appearance delicately deſcribed, and wrought to a compariſon, which, in my opinion, is one of the moſt juſt, beautiful, and noble pieces of imagery, to be found in modern poetry; *Night-Thoughts*, No. II. p. 42. 4to. edit.

and glimmers, with a dying faintneſs, on the mountain's brow. The little vivacity, that remains, decays every moment. It can no longer hold it's ſtation. While I ſpeak, it expires; and reſigns the world to the gradual approaches of night.

———Now *twilight* grey
Has in her ſober liv'ry all things clad *.

Every object, a little while ago, glared with light; but now, all appears under a more qualified luſtre. The animals harmonize with the inſenſible creation; and what was *gay* in thoſe, as well as *glittering* in this, gives place to an univerſal *gravity*. In the meadows, all was jocund and ſportive: but now the gameſome lambs, are grown weary of their frolicks; and the tired ſhepherd has impoſed ſilence on his pipe. In the branches, all was ſprightlineſs and ſong: but now the lively green is wrapt in the deſcending glooms; and no tuneful air are heard, only the plaintive ſtock-dove, cooing mournfully through the grove.—Should I now be vain and trifling, the heavens and the earth would rebuke my unſeaſonable levity. Therefore, be theſe moments devoted to thoughts, *ſedate* as the cloſing day; *ſolemn*, as the face of things. And, indeed, however my ſocial hours are enlivened with innocent pleaſantry; let every evening, in her ſable habit, toll the bell to ſerious conſideration. Nothing can be more proper, for a perſon who walks on the borders of eternity, and is haſting continually to his final audit; nothing more proper, than daily to ſlip away from the circle of amuſements, and frequently to relinquiſh the hurry of buſineſs, in order to conſider and adjuſt "the things that belong to his "peace."

Since the ſun is departed, from whence can it proceed, that I am not involved in pitchy darkneſs? Whence theſe remainders of *diminiſhed brightneſs*? Which, though ſcarcely

* MILT. *Par. Loſt*, B. IV. l. 598.

carcely forming a refulgence, ſoften and ſooth the hor-rors of night. I ſee not the ſhining ruler, yet am chear-ed with a real, though faint communication of his ſplen-dor.—Does he remember us, in his progreſs through other-climes? Does he ſend a *detachment* of his rays, to *eſcort* us during his perſonal abſence; or to *cover* (if I may uſe the military term) our *retreat* from the ſcene of action? Has he bequeathed us a dividend of his beams, ſufficient to render our circumſtances eaſy, and our ſituation agreeable? Till ſleep pours it's ſoft op-preſſion on the organs of ſenſe; till ſleep ſuſpends all the operations of our hands; and entirely ſuperſedes any farther occaſion for the light.

No: it is ill-judged and unreaſonable, to aſcribe this beneficent conduct to the ſun. Not unto him; not unto him; but unto his *Almighty Maker* we are obliged, for this pleaſing attendant, this valuable legacy. The gracious Author of our being, has ſo diſpoſed the col-lection of circumambient air, as to make it productive of this fine and wonderful effect. The ſun-beams, fall-ing on the higher parts of the aëreal fluid, inſtead of paſſing on in ſtrait lines, are bent inwards and conducted to our ſight. Their natural courſe is over-ruled, and they are bidden to wheel about; on purpoſe to favour us with a welcome and ſalutary viſit.—By which means, the bleſſing of light, and the ſeaſon of buſineſs, are conſi-derably prolonged. And, what is a very endearing cir-cumſtance, prolonged moſt conſiderably; when the ve-hement heats of ſummer, incline the *ſtudent* to poſtpone his walk, till the temperate evening prevails; when the important labours of the harveſt, call the *huſbandman* abroad, before the day is fully riſen.

After all the ardors of the ſultry day, how reviving is this *coolneſs!*—This gives new verdure to the fading plants; new vivacity to the withering flowers; and a more exquiſite fragrance to their mingled ſcents.—By

this, the *air* alſo receives a new force, and is qualified to exert itſelf with greater activity. Qualified to brace our limbs; to heave our lungs; and co-operate, with a briſker impulſe, in perpetuating the circulation of our blood.—This I might call the grand *alembic* of nature; which diſtils her moſt ſovereign *cordial*, the refreſhing *dews*. Inceſſant heat, would rob us of their beneficial agency; and oblige them to evaporate, in imperceptible exhalations. Turbulent winds, or even the gentler motions of *Aurora*'s fan, would diſſipate the riſing vapours, and not ſuffer them to form a coalition. But, favoured by the ſtilneſs, and condenſed by the coolneſs of the night; they unite in pearly drops, and create that *finely-tempered* humidity, which chears the vegetable world, as ſleep exhilarates the animal.

Not unlike to theſe, are the advantages of *ſolitude*. The world is a troubled ocean; and who can erect ſtable purpoſes, on it's fluctuating waves? The world is a ſchool of wrong; and who does not feel himſelf warping to it's pernicious influences *? On this ſea of glaſs † how inſenſibly we ſlide from our own ſtedfaſtneſs! Some ſacred *truth*, which was ſtruck in lively characters on our ſouls, is obſcured, if not obliterated. Some worthy *reſolution*, which heaven had wrought in our breaſts, is ſhaken, if not overthrown. Some inticing *vanity*, which we had ſolemnly renounced, again practiſes it's wiles, and again captivates our affections. How often has an unwary glance, kindled a fever of irregular deſire in our hearts? How often has a word of applauſe, dropt luſcious poiſon into our ears; or ſome diſreſpectful expreſſion raiſed a guſt of paſſion in our boſoms? Our innocence is of ſo *tender* a conſtitution, that it ſuffers in the promiſcuous croud. Our purity is of ſo *delicate* a complexion that

* *Nunquam a turbâ mores, quos extuli, refero. Aliquid, ex eo quod compoſui, turbatur: aliquid, ex his quæ fugavi, redit. Inimica eſt multorum converſatio.* SENEC.

† Rev. xv. 2.

that it ſcarce touches on the world, without contracting a ſtain. We ſee, we hear, with peril.

But here *ſafety* dwells. Every meddling and intruſive avocation, is ſecluded. Silence holds the door againſt the ſtrife of tongues, and all the impertinencies of idle converſation. The buſy ſwarm of vain images, and cajoling temptations; which beſet us, with a buzzing importunity, amidſt the gaieties of life; are chaſed by theſe thickening ſhades.—Here I may, without diſturbance, commune with my own heart; and learn that beſt of ſciences, to *know myſelf*. Here, the ſoul may rally her diſſipated powers, and grace recover it's native energy.—This is the opportunity, to rectify every evil impreſſion; to expel the poiſon, and guard againſt the contagion, of corrupting examples. This is the place, where I may, with advantage, apply myſelf to ſubdue the *rebel within*; and be maſter, not of a ſceptre, but of myſelf.—Throng then, ye ambitious, the levees of the powerful; I will be punctual in my aſſignations with ſolitude. To a mind intent upon it's own improvement, ſolitude has charms incomparably more engaging, than the *entertainments* preſented in the theatre; or the *honours* conferred in the drawing-room.

I ſaid, ſolitude.—Am I then *alone?*—'Tis true, my acquaintance are at a diſtance. I have ſtole away from company, and am remote from all *human* obſervation.—But that is an alarming thought,

> Millions of *ſpiritual* creatures walk the earth,
> *Unſeen*, both when we wake, and when we ſleep *.

Perhaps, there may be numbers of thoſe *inviſible beings*, patrolling this ſame retreat; and joining with me, in contemplating the Creator's works. Perhaps, thoſe *miniſtring ſpirits*, who rejoice at the converſion of a ſinner, and hold up the goings of the righteous, may follow us to the lonely receſs; and, even in our moſt

* MILT. *Par. Loſt*, B. IV. l. 677.

ſolitary moments, be our conſtant *attendants*.—What a pleaſing awe is awakened, by ſuch a reflection! How venerable it renders my retired walks! I am ſtruck with reverence, as under the roof of ſome *ſacred edifice*; or in the *preſence-chamber* of ſome mighty monarch.—O! may I never bring any pride of imagination, nor indulge the leaſt diſſolute affection; where ſuch refined and exalted intelligences exerciſe their watch!

'Tis poſſible, that I am encompaſſed with ſuch a cloud of witneſſes; but it is certain, that GOD, the *infinite eternal* GOD, is now and ever with me. The great JEHOVAH, before whom all the angelic armies bow their heads, and veil their faces, ſurrounds me; ſupports me; pervades me. "In HIM, I live, move, and have my "being."—The whole world is his auguſt temple; and, in the moſt ſequeſtered corner, I appear before his adorable majeſty, no leſs than when I worſhip in his houſe, or kneel at his altar. In every place, therefore, let me pay him the homage of a heart, cleanſed from idols, and devoted to his ſervice. In every circumſtance, let me feel no *ambition*, but to *pleaſe* him; nor covet any *happineſs*, but to *enjoy* him.

How ſublime is the deſcription, and how ſtriking the ſentiment, in that noble paſſage of the pſalms! *Whither ſhall I go from thy Spirit, or whither ſhall I flee from thy preſence? If I climb up into* the heights of *heaven, thou art there* inthroned in light. *If I go down to the* depths of the *grave, thou art there alſo* in thy pavilion of darkneſs. *If I retire* to the remoteſt eaſtern climes, *where the morning firſt takes wing: if*, ſwifter than the darting ray, *I* paſs to the oppoſite regions of the weſt, and *remain in the uttermoſt parts of the ſea*:* ſhall I, in the diſtan

* *Pſalm* cxxxix. 7, 8, 9. There is, I think, an additional ſtrength and beauty in the thought; if, with the learned Mr. *Mudge*, we ſuppoſe an *antitheſis* between the two clauſes of the laſt verſe, as there evidently is between thoſe of the preceding; and that they expreſs in a poetical ſtile, the extremities of the *Eaſt* and the *Weſt*.

diſtant ſituation, be beyond thy reach; or by *this* ſudden tranſition, eſcape thy notice! So far from it; that could I, with one glance of thought, tranſport myſelf beyond all the bounds of creation; I ſhould ſtill be incircled with the immenſity of thy eſſence; or rather, ſtill be incloſed in the hollow of thy hand.—Awful, yet delightful truth! Let it be interwoven with every thought! and become one with the very conſciouſneſs of my exiſtence! That I may continually *walk with GOD*; and conduct myſelf, in every ſtep of my behaviour, "as *ſeeing HIM that is inviſible.*"

They are the happy perſons; felicity, true felicity, is *all their own*; who live under an habitual ſenſe of GOD's omnipreſence, and a ſweet perſuaſion of his ſpecial love. If dangers threaten, their impregnable defence is at hand. Nothing can be ſo near to terrify, as their Almighty Guardian to ſecure them.—To theſe, the hours can never be *tedious*; and it is impoſſible, for them, to be *alone*. Do they ſtep aſide from the occupations of animal life? A more exalted ſet of employments engage their attention. They addreſs themſelves, in all the various acts of devotion, to their heavenly Father; *who* now *ſees in ſecret, and will* hereafter *reward them openly*. They ſpread all their wants, before his indulgent eye; and diſburden all their ſorrows, into his compaſſionate boſom.—Do they withdraw from human ſociety? They find themſelves under the more immediate regards of their Maker. If they reſign the ſatisfactions of ſocial intercourſe; it is to cultivate a correſpondence with the condeſcending DEITY, and taſte the pleaſures of divine friendſhip.—What is ſuch a *ſtate*, but the very ſuburbs of heaven? What is ſuch a *conduct*, but an antepaſt of eternal bleſſedneſs?

Now, my ſoul, the day is *ended*. The hours are all fled. They are fled to the ſupreme Judge, and have given in their evidence. An evidence, regiſtered in hea-

ven! and to be produced, at the great audit.—Happy *they!* whoſe improvement has kept pace with the fleeting minutes. Who have ſeized the important fugitives; and engaged them in the purſuit of *wiſdom*, or devoted them to the ſervice of *virtue*.

Fugitives indeed they are. Our moments ſlip away ſilently and inſenſibly. The thief ſteals not more unperceived from the pillaged houſe.—And will the runagates never ſtop? No: where-ever we are, however employed, time purſues his inceſſant courſe. Though *we* are liſtleſs and dilatory; the great meaſurer of our days preſſes on; ſtill preſſes on, in his unwearied career *; and whirls our weeks, and months, and years away.—Is it not then ſurpriſingly ſtrange, to hear people complain of the *tediouſneſs* of their time, and how *heavy* it hangs upon their hands? To ſee them contrive a variety of amuſing artifices, to accelerate it's flight, and get rid of it's burden?—Ah! thoughtleſs mortals! Why need you urge the headlong torrent? Your days are ſwifter than a *poſt*; which, carrying diſpatches of the laſt importance, with unremitted ſpeed ſcours the road. They paſs away like the nimble *ſhips*; which have the wind in their wings, and ſkim along the watry plain. They haſten to their deſtined period, with the rapidity of an *eagle*; which leaves the ſtormy blaſt behind her, while ſhe cleaves the air, and darts upon her prey †.

Now the day is gone, how *ſhort* it appears! When my fond eye beheld it in *perſpective*, it ſeemed a very con-

* *Sed fugit interea, fugit irreparabile Tempus.* VIRG.

† *Job* ix. 25, 26. By theſe three very expreſſive images, the inſpired poet repreſents the *unintermitted* and *rapid* flight of time. The paſſage is illuſtrated with great judgment, and equal delicacy, in Dr. *Grey*'s moſt ingenious abridgment of *Schultens*.—*Quæ tribus in elementis velociſſima, hic admirabili cum emphaſi congeruntur. In terris, nil pernicius curſore, & quidem læti quid ferente. Rapidius tamen actæ undas, non ſecant, ſed ſupervolant, navigiola papyro contexta. Omnium rapidiſſime aëream grandibus alis permetitur aquila, præcipiti lapſu ruens in prædam.*

conſiderable ſpace. Minutes, crowded upon minutes; and hours, ranged behind hours; exhibited an extenſive draught, and flattered me with a long progreſſion of pleaſures. But, upon a *retroſpective* view, how wonderfully is the ſcene altered! The landſcape, large and ſpacious, which a warm fancy drew; brought to the teſt of cool experience, ſhrinks into a ſpan. Juſt as the ſhores vaniſh, and mountains dwindle to a ſpot; when the ſailor, ſurrounded by ſkies and ocean, throws his laſt look on his native land.—How clearly do I now diſcover the cheat! May it never impoſe upon my unwary imagination again! I find there is nothing abiding on this ſide eternity. A *long* duration, in a ſtate of *finite* exiſtence, is mere illuſion.

Perhaps, the *healthy*, and the *gay*, may not readily credit the ſerious truth; eſpecially from a young pen, and new to it's employ. Let us then refer ourſelves to the deciſion of the *antient*. Aſk ſome venerable old perſon, who is juſt marching off the mortal ſtage; *How many have been the days of the years of thy life* ?* It was a monarch's queſtion; and therefore can want no recommendation to the faſhionable world.—Obſerve, how he ſhakes his hoary locks, and from a deep-felt conviction replies; "*Fourſcore years* have finiſhed their "rounds, to furrow theſe cheeks, and cloath this head "in ſnow. Such a term may ſeem long and large, to "inconſiderate youth. But O! how ſhort, how ſcanty, "to one that has made the experiment! *Short*, as a "gleam of tranſient ſunſhine; *ſcanty*, as the ſhadow "that departeth. Methinks, it was but yeſterday, that "I exchanged my childiſh ſports, for manly exerciſes; "and now, I am reſigning them both, for the ſleep of "death. As ſoon as we are *born*, we begin to draw to "our *end*; and how ſmall is the interval, between the "cradle and the tomb!"—O! may we believe this teſtimony of mature age! May every evening bring it, with

* Gen. xlvii. 8. *Heb. Bib.*

with clearer evidence, to our minds! And may we form ſuch an eſtimate of the little pittance, while it is upon the advancing hand, as we ſhall certainly make when the ſands are all run down!

Let me add one reflection on the *work* to be *done*, while this ſhuttle is flying through the loom*. A work of no ſmall difficulty, yet of the utmoſt conſequence! —Haſt thou not ſeen, haſt thou not known, the excellent of the earth; who were living images of their Maker? His *divine likeneſs* was transfuſed into their hearts, and beamed forth in all their conduct. Beamed forth in meekneſs of wiſdom, and purity of affection; in all the tender offices of love, and all the noble efforts of zeal. To be ſtampt with the ſame beautiful ſignature, and to be followers of them, as they were of CHRIST; *this*, *this* is thy *buſineſs*. On the accompliſhment of this, thy eternal all depends. And, will an affair of ſuch unſpeakable weight, admit of a moment's delay, or conſiſt with the leaſt remiſſneſs?—Eſpecially, ſince much of thy appointed time is already elapſed; and the remainder is *all uncertainty*, ſave only that it is in the very act to fly.—Or ſuppoſe, thou hadſt made a covenant with the grave, and waſt aſſured of reaching the age of *Methuſelah*; how ſoon would even ſuch a leaſe expire!—Extend it, if you pleaſe, ſtill farther, and let it be *co-exiſtent* with nature itſelf. How inconſiderable is the addition! For, yet a very little while, and the commiſſioned archangel lifts up his hand to heaven, and ſwears by the Almighty Name, *That time ſhall be no longer*†. Then, *abuſed* opportunities, will never return;

* *My days are ſwifter than a weaver's ſhuttle*, Job vii. 6.

† This alludes to the beginning of *Revelations* the xth; which, abſtracted from it's ſpiritual meaning, and conſidered only as a ſtately *piece* of *machinery*, well deſerves our attention; and, I will venture to ſay, has not it's ſuperior, perhaps not it's equal, in any of the moſt celebrated maſters of *Greece* and *Rome*.—All that is gloomy or beautiful in the atmoſphere, all that is ſtriking or magnificent in every

turn; and *new* opportunities will never more be offered. Then, ſhould negligent mortals wiſh—wiſh ever ſo paſſionately—for a few hours—a few moments only—to be thrown back from the opening eternity; *thouſands* of worlds would not be able to procure the grant.

Shall I, now, be induſtrious to ſhorten, what is no longer than a ſpan; or to quicken the pace of what is ever on the wing? Shall I ſquander away what is *unutterably important*, while it laſts; and, when once departed, is *altogether irrevocable!* O! my ſoul, forbear the folly; forbear the deſperate extravagance. Wilt thou chide as a loiterer, the arrow that boundeth from the ſtring; or ſweep away diamonds, as the refuſe of thy houſe?—Throw time away! Aſtoniſhing, ruinous, irreparable pro-

every element, is taken to heighten the idea. Yet nothing is diſproportionate; but an uniform air of ineffable majeſty greatens, exalts, ennobles the whole.—Be pleaſed to obſerve the *aſpect* of this auguſt perſonage. All the brightneſs of the ſun, ſhines in his countenance; and all the rage of the fire, burns in his feet.—See his *apparel*. The clouds compoſe his robe, and the drapery of the ſky floats upon his ſhoulders. The rainbow forms his diadem; and that which "compaſſeth the heaven with a glorious circle," is the ornament of his head.—Behold his *attitude*. One foot ſtands on the ocean, the other reſts on the land. The wide extended earth, and the world of waters, ſerve as pedeſtals for thoſe mighty columns.—Conſider the *action*. His hand is lifted up to the height of the ſtars. He ſpeaks; and the regions of the firmament echo with the mighty accents, as the midnight deſart reſounds with the lion's roar. The artillery of the ſkies is diſcharged at the ſignal; a peal of ſevenfold thunder ſpreads the alarm; and prepares the univerſe to receive his orders.—To finiſh all; and give the higheſt grandeur, as well as the utmoſt ſolemnity, to the repreſentation; hear the *decree* that iſſues from his mouth—He *ſwears by Him that liveth for ever and ever*. In whatever manner, ſo majeſtic a perſon had expreſſed himſelf; He could not fail of commanding univerſal attention. But when he confirms his ſpeech, by a moſt ſacred and inviolable oath; we are not only wrapt in ſilent ſuſpenſe, but overwhelmed with the profoundeſt awe.—He ſwears, *That time ſhall be no longer*. Was ever voice ſo full of terror; ſo big with wonder? It proclaims, not the fall of empires, but the final period of things. It ſtrikes off the wheels of nature; bids ages and generations ceaſe to roll; and with one potent word, conſigns a whole world over to diſſolution.—This is one among a multitude of very ſublime and *maſterly ſtrokes*, to be found in that too much neglected book—the BIBLE.

profuſeneſs! Throw empires away, and be blameleſs. But O! be parſimonious of thy days; huſband thy precious hours. They go connected, indiſſolubly connected, with heaven or hell*. *Improved*, they are a ſure pledge of everlaſting glory; *waſted*, they are a ſad preface to never-ending confuſion and anguiſh.

What a *profound ſilence* has compoſed the world! So profound is the ſilence, that my very breath ſeems a noiſe; the ticking of my watch is diſtinctly heard; if I do but ſtir, it creates a diſturbance.—There is, now, none of that confuſed din, from the tumultuous city: no voice of jovial ruſtics, from the neighbouring meadow: no chirping melody from the ſhady thicket.—Every lip is ſealed. Not the leaſt whiſper, invades the air; not the leaſt motion, ruſtles among the boughs. *Echo* herſelf ſleeps unmoleſted. The expanded ear, though all attention, catches no ſound but the liquid lapſe of a diſtant murmuring ſtream.

All things are huſh'd, as nature's ſelf lay dead.

If, in the midſt of this deep and univerſal compoſure, ten thouſand bellowing thunders ſhould burſt over my head; and rend the ſkies, with their united vollies: how ſhould I bear ſo *unexpected a ſhock?* It would ſtun my ſenſes, and confound my thoughts. I ſhould ſhudder in every limb; perhaps, ſink to the earth with terror.—Conſider then, O mortals! conſider the much more *prodigious* and *amazing* call, which will, ere long,

* I remember to have ſeen upon a ſun-dial in a phyſician's garden at *Northampton*, the following *inſcription*; which, I think, is the most *proper motto* for the inſtrument, that meaſures our time; and the most *ſtriking admonition*, that can poſſibly be preſented to every eye.

AB HOC MOMENTO PENDET ÆTERNITAS.

The weighty ſenſe of which, I know not how to expreſs in *English* more happily than in thoſe words of Dr. *Watts*;

Good God! on what a *ſlender thread*
[Or, on what a *moment* of time]
Hang everlaſting things!

long, alarm your ſleeping bones. When the tenants of the tomb have ſlumbered, in the moſt undiſturbed repoſe, for a multitude of ages; what an inconceivable conſternation muſt the *ſhout* of the *archangel*, and the *trump* of GOD, occaſion! Will it not wound the ear of the ungodly; and affright, even to diſtraction, the impenitent ſinner? The ſtupendous peal will ſound through the vaſt of heaven; will ſhake the foundations of nature; and pierce even the deepeſt receſſes of the grave. And how—O! how will the priſoners of divine juſtice, be able to endure that tremendous *ſummons*, to a far more tremendous tribunal?—Do thou, my ſoul, liſten to the *ſtill voice* of the goſpel. Attend, in this thy day, to the gracious invitations of thy Saviour. Then, ſhall that great midnight cry loſe it's *horror*, and be *muſic* in thy ears. It ſhall be welcome to thy reviving clay, as the tidings of liberty, to the dungeon captive; as the year of jubilee to the haraſſed ſlave. This, this ſhall be it's charming import; "*Awake, and ſing, ye that "dwell in duſt**."

What a general *ceſſation* of *affairs*, has this duſky hour introduced! A little while ago, all was hurry, hurry. Life and activity exerted themſelves in a thouſand buſy forms. The city ſwarmed, with paſſing and repaſſing multitudes. All the country was ſweat and duſt. The air floated in perpetual agitation, by the flitting birds, and humming bees. *Art* ſat prying with her piercing eyes; while induſtry plied her reſtleſs hands.—But ſee; how all this fervent, and impetuous buſtle, is fled with the ſetting ſun. The beaſts are ſlunk to their graſſy couch; and the winged people are retired, to their downy neſts. The hammer has reſigned it's ſounding taſk, and the file ceaſes to repeat it's flying touches. Shut is the well-frequented ſhop, and it's threſhold no longer worn by the feet of numerous cuſtom-

* Iſaiah xxvi. 19.

cuſtomers. The village ſwain lies drowned in ſlumber and even his truſty dog, who, for a conſiderable time ſtood centry at the door, is extended at his eaſe, and ſnores with his maſter.—In every place *toil* reclines her head, and *application* folds her arms. All intereſts ſeem to be forgot; all purſuits are ſuſpended; all employment is ſunk away; ſunk away with thoſe fluttering myriads, which lately ſported in the ſun's departing rays.—'Tis like the ſabbath of univerſal nature; or as though the pulſe of life ſtood ſtill.

Thus will it be with our infinitely momentous concerns; when once *the ſhadows of the evening*, (that long evening, which follows the footſteps of death!) are *ſtretched over us*. The dead cannot ſeek unto God; the living, the living alone, are poſſeſſed of this ineſtimable opportunity*. "There is no work or device, "no repentance or amendment, in the grave†, whi-"ther we are all haſting." When once that *cloſing ſcene* is advanced, we ſhall have no other part to act on this *earthly*

* *Behold! Now is the accepted time. Behold! Now is the day of ſalvation.* 2 Cor. vi. 2.

Haſte, haſte, He lies in wait, He's at the door,
Inſidious death! Should his ſtrong hand arreſt,
No compoſition ſets the priſ'ner free.

† They who are gone down to the grave, are repreſented (Iſa. xxxviii. 11.) by the phraſe—*Jushebi hedel*—rendered by *Vitringa* *Thoſe that inhabit the* land of *intermiſſion* or *ceſſation*.—Which prevents all appearance of *tautology* in the ſentence; and is, I think, a valuable *improvement* of the tranſlation: as it conveys an idea, not only diſtinct from the preceding, but of a very poetical and very affecting nature; ſuch as was perfectly natural for the royal ſinger, and royal ſufferer to dwell upon, in his deſponding moments.—Thus interpreted the ſenſe will run; "*I ſhall ſee man no more*; I ſhall be cut off from "the chearful ways of men, and all the ſweets of human ſociety. "And, what is a farther aggravation of the threatened ſtroke, *I ſhall* "by it's taking place, *be* numbered *with thoſe, that inherit the land of* "*ceſſation* and inactivity. Where there will be no more poſſibility "of contributing to the happineſs of my kingdom; no more oppor-"tunity of advancing my Creator's glory; or of making my own fi-"nal ſalvation ſure."—A ſentiment like *this*, is grand, important, and full of benevolence; removes all ſuſpicion of unbecoming *puſillanimity*, and does the higheſt *honour* to the monarch's character.

rthly theatre. Then, the ſluggard, who has ſlumbered away life in a criminal inactivity, muſt lie down in hopeleſs diſtreſs, and everlaſting ſorrow. Then, that awful doom will take place, "He that is *holy*, let him "be holy ſtill; and he that is *filthy*, let him be filthy "for ever."

Is it ſo, my ſoul? Is this the *only*, *only* time allotted, for obtaining the great reward, and making thy ſalvation ſure? And art thou lulled in a *vain ſecurity*; or dreaming in a *ſupine inadvertency*? Start, O! ſtart from thy trance. Gird up the loins of thy mind, and work while it is day. Improve the preſent ſeed-time, that eternity may yield a joyful harveſt.—We eſpecially, who are watchmen in *Iſrael*, and miniſters of the glorious goſpel; may *we* be awakened, by this conſideration, to all aſſiduity in our holy office. Some or other of *our people*, are ever and anon departing into the inviſible ſtate; all *our friends*, are making inceſſant approaches to their long home; and we *ourſelves*, ſhall very ſhortly be tranſmitted to the confinement of the tomb. *This* is the favourable juncture, wherein alone we can contribute to their endleſs welfare. This is the criſis, the all-important *criſis*, of their final felicity. Inſtantly, therefore, let us pour in our wholeſome inſtructions; inſtantly, let us ply them with our earneſt exhortations. A moment's delay, may be an irreparable loſs: may be irretrievable ruin. While we procraſtinate, a fatal ſtroke may intervene; and place *us*, beyond the power of adminiſtering; or place *them*, beyond all poſſibility of receiving any ſpiritual good*.

* The caſe, repreſented by the prophet (1 *Kings* xx. 40.) ſeems perfectly applicable on this occaſion. *As thy ſervant was buſy here and there, he was gone.* So, while we are either *remiſs* in our function, or laying ourſelves out upon *inferior* cares, the people of our charge may be gone:—gone beyond the influence of our counſels; beyond the reach of our prayers;—gone into the *unchangeable* and eternal ſtate.

How frequently is the face of nature *changed!* and by changing, made more *agreeable!*—The long-continued glitter of the day, renders the ſoothing ſhades of the evening doubly welcome. Nor does the morn even purple the Eaſt with ſo engaging a luſtre, as after the gloom of a dark and diſmal night.—At preſent, a calm of tranquillity is ſpread through the univerſe. The weary winds have forgot to blow. The gentle gales have fanned themſelves aſleep. Not ſo much as a ſingle leaf nods. Even the quivering aſpin reſts. *And not one breath curls o'er the ſtream.* Sometimes, on the contrary, the *tempeſt* ſummons all the forces of the air, and pours itſelf, with reſiſtleſs fury, from the angry North. The whole atmoſphere is toſſed into tumultuous confuſion, and the watry world is heaved to the clouds. The aſtoniſhed mariner, and his ſtraining veſſel, now ſcale the rolling mountain, and hang dreadfully viſible on the broken ſurge: now ſhoot, with headlong impetuoſity, into the yawning gulf; and neither hulk, nor maſt, is ſeen. The ſtorm ſweeps over the continent: raves along the city-ſtreets: ſtruggles through the foreſt boughs; and terrifies the ſavage nations with a howl, more wildly horrid than their own. The knotty oaks bend before the blaſt; their iron trunks groan; and their ſtubborn limbs are daſhed to the ground. The lofty dome rocks; and even the ſolid tower totters on it's baſis.

Such variations are kindly contrived, and with an evident condeſcenſion to the fickleneſs of our taſte. Becauſe, a perpetual repetition of the *ſame* objects would create ſatiety and *diſguſt*; therefore, the indulgent Father of our race has diverſified the univerſal ſcene, and bid every appearance bring with it the charm of novelty.—This circumſtance is *beneficial*, as well as *entertaining*. Providence, ever gracious to mortals; ever intent upon promoting our felicity; has taken care to mingle in the conſtitution of things, what is pleaſing to

our imagination, with what is ſerviceable to our intereſts. The piercing winds, and rugged aſpect of winter, render the balmy gales, and flowery ſcenes of ſpring, peculiarly delightful. At the ſame time, the keen froſts mellow the ſoil, and prepare it for the hand of induſtry. The ruſhing rains impregnate the glebe, and fit it to become a magazine of plenty. The earth is a great *laboratory*; and *December*'s cold collects the groſs materials, which are *ſublimated* by the refining warmth of *May*. The air is a pure elaſtic fluid; and were it always to remain in *this* motionleſs ſerenity, it would loſe much of it's active ſpring; was it never agitated by *thoſe wholeſome* concuſſions, it would contract a noiſome, perhaps, a peſtilential taint. In which caſes, our reſpiration, inſtead of purifying, would corrupt the vital juices: inſtead of ſupplying us with refreſhment, would be a ſource of diſeaſes; or every gaſp we draw, might be unavoidable death *.—How then ſhould we admire, how ſhould we adore, that happy union of benignity and wiſdom; which, from a *variety* of diſpenſations, produces an *uniformity* of good! Produces a perpetual ſucceſſion of delights, and an uninterrupted ſeries of advantages!

The *darkneſs* is now at it's height; and I cannot but admire the obliging manner of it's taking place. It comes not with a blunt and abrupt incivility, but makes

* Conſidering the immenſe quantity of coals, and other combuſtible materials which are daily conſumed, and evaporate into the air. Conſidering the numberleſs ſteams, and clouds of ſmoke, which almoſt continually overwhelm populous cities;—the noiſome exhalations, which ariſe from thronged infirmaries, and loathſome jails; from ſtagnating lakes, and putrid fens;—the variety of offenſive and unwholeſome effluvia, which proceed from other cauſes;—it is a very remarkable inſtance of a Providence, at once tenderly kind, and infinitely powerful, that mankind is not *ſuffocated* with ſtench; that the air is not *choaked* with filth.—The air is the *common ſewer*, into which ten thouſand times ten thouſand nuiſances are inceſſantly diſcharged; yet it is preſerved ſo *thoroughly clear*, as to afford the moſt tranſparent medium for viſion; ſo *delicately undulatory*, as to tranſmit, with all imaginable diſtinctneſs, every diverſity of ſound, ſo *perfectly pure*, as to be the conſtant refiner of the fluids, in every animal that breathes.

gentle and reſpectful advances. A *precipitate* tranſition, from the ſplendors of day, to all the horrors of midnight, would be inconvenient and frightful. It would bewilder the traveller in his journey; it would ſtrike the creation with amazement; and, perhaps, be pernicious to the organs of ſight. Therefore the gloom ruſhes not upon us inſtantaneouſly, but increaſes by ſlow degrees; and, ſending *twilight* before as it's *harbinger*, decently adverti-ſes us of it's approach. By this means, we are neither alarmed, nor incommoded, by the change; but are able to take all ſuitable and timely meaſures, for it's reception.—Thus graciouſly has providence regulated, not only the grand *viciſſitudes* of the ſeaſons, but alſo the *common interchanges* of light and darkneſs, with an apparent reference to our comfort.

Now the fierce *inhabitants* of the *foreſt* forſake their dens. A thouſand grim forms, a thouſand growling monſters, pace the deſart. Death is in their jaws, while ſtung with hunger, and athirſt for blood, they roam their nightly rounds.—Unfortunate the *traveller*, who is overtaken by the night, in thoſe diſmal wilds! How muſt he ſtand aghaſt, at the mingled yell of ravenous throats, and lions roaring after their prey! Defend him, propitious heaven! or elſe he muſt ſee his endearing ſpouſe, and hail his native home, no more!—Now, the prowling wolf, like a murderous ruffian, dogs the ſhepherd's footſteps, and beſets his bleating charge. The fox, like a crafty felon, ſteals to the thatched cottage, and carries off the feathered booty.

Happy for the world, were theſe the only deſtroyers that walk in darkneſs. But, alas! there are ſavages in human ſhape; who, muffled in ſhades, infeſt the abodes of civilized life. The *ſons* of *violence* make choice of this ſeaſon*, to perpetrate the moſt outrageous acts of wrong

* —— —— When night
Darkens the ſtreets, then wander forth the ſons
Of *Belial*, flown with inſolence and wine. MILT.

wrong and robbery. The *adulterer* waiteth for the twilight; and, baſer than the villain on the highway, betrays the honour of his boſom-friend. Now, *faction* forms her cloſe cabals, and whiſpers her traiterous inſinuations. Now, *rebellion* plans her accurſed plots, and prepares the train to blow a nation into ruin. Now, crimes, which hide their odious heads in the day, haunt the ſeats of ſociety, and ſtalk through the gloom with audacious front. Now, the *vermin* of the *ſtews* crawl from their lurking holes, to wallow in ſin, and ſpread contagion through the night. Each ſoothing himſelf with the fond notion, that all is ſafe; that no eye ſees.

Are they then concealed? Prepoſterous madmen! To draw the curtain between their infamous practices, and a little ſet of mortals; but lay them open, to all theſe chaſte and *wakeful eyes* of heaven*! As though the moon and ſtars were made, to light men to their revels, and not to GOD.—Are they then concealed? No, truly. Was every one of theſe vigilant luminaries cloſed; an eye *keener* than the lightning's flaſh, an eye *brighter* than ten thouſand ſuns, beholds their every motion. Their thickeſt ſhades are beaming day†, to the jealous inſpector, and ſupreme judge of human actions. Deluded creatures! have ye not heard, have ye not read, "That clouds and darkneſs are HIS majeſtic reſidence‡?" In that very gloom, to which you fly for covert, he erects his throne. What you reckon your *own*, is the bar of his tribunal. O! remember this! and in awe, and ſin not. Remember, that the great

* ——— *Sed luna videt, ſed ſidera teſtes*
Intendunt oculos.

† This is finely, and very forcibly, expreſſed by the Pſalmiſt: *If ſay, Peradventure the Darkneſs ſhall cover me; then ſhall my night be turned to day.* Or, as it may be rendered ſomewhat more emphatically, *Even the night ſhall be broad daylight all around me*, Pſalm cxxxix. 10.

‡ Pſalm. xcvii. 2.

and terrible GOD *is about your path**, when you take your midnight range; *is about your bed*, when you indulge the looſe deſire; *and ſpies out all your ways*, be they ever ſo ſecretly conducted, or artfully diſguiſed.

Some minutes ago, a paſſenger croſſed along the road. His horſe's foot ſtruck the ground, and fetched fire from a flint. My eye, though at a diſtance, catched the view; and ſaw, with *great clearneſs*, the tranſient ſparkles: of which, had I been ever ſo near, I ſhould not have diſcerned the *leaſt glimpſe*, under the blaze of day. —So†, when ſickneſs has drawn a *veil* over the gaiety of our hearts; when misfortunes have eclipſed the ſplendor of our outward circumſtances; how many *important convictions* preſent themſelves, with the brighteſt evidence! Under the ſunſhine of proſperity, they lay undiſcovered; but, when ſome intervening cloud has darkened the ſcene, they emerge from their obſcurity, and even glitter upon our minds. Then, the *world*, that deluſive cheat, confeſſes her emptineſs: but JESUS, the bright and morning-ſtar, beams forth with inimitable luſtre. Then, *vice* loſes all her fallacious allurements; that painted ſtrumpet is horrible, as the hags of hell: but *virtue*, deſpiſed virtue, gains lovelineſs from a louring providence, and treads the ſhades

* The original words are much ſtronger than the tranſlation. *Zeri* and *eſkenthe*, ſignify, Thou *ſifteſt* my path, and art *intimately acquainted with* all my ways. The former, I apprehend, denoting the *exact* cognizance, which the Almighty taketh; the latter implying the *conſtant* inſpection, which he exerciſeth; over all the circumſtances of our conduct. *Pſal.* cxxxix. 2.

† I beg leave to inform the *young Gentleman*, whoſe name dignifies my dedication; That *this* was a remark of his honoured *Father*, when we rode together, and converſed in a duſky evening. I mention this circumſtance, partly, to ſecure the paragraph from contempt; partly to give him, and the world, an idea of that eminently ſerious taſte which diſtinguiſhed my deceaſed Friend.—The *leſs obvious* the reflection, the more clearly it diſcovers a turn of mind, remarkably ſpiritual; which would ſuffer nothing to eſcape, without yielding ſome religious improvement. The *meaner* the incident, the more admirable was that fertility of imagination, which could deduce the ſublimeſt truths, from the moſt trivial occurrences.

ſhades with more than mortal charms.—May this reconcile me, and all the *ſons* of *ſorrow*, to our appointed ſhare of ſuffering! If tribulation tend to diſſipate the inward darkneſs, and pour heavenly day upon our minds; welcome diſtreſs; welcome diſappointment; welcome whatever our froward fleſh, or peeviſh paſſions, would *miſcal* calamities. *Theſe light afflictions, which are but for a moment*, ſhall ſit eaſy upon our ſpirits; ſince they befriend our knowledge; promote our faith; and ſo, "*work out for us, a far more exceeding and eternal* "*weight of glory**."

How has this darkneſs ſnatched every ſplendid and graceful object from my ſight! It has daſhed the ſponge over the pictures of ſpring, and deſtroyed all the *delicate diſtinctions* of things. Where are now the fine tinges, which ſo lately charmed me from the glowing parterre? The bluſh is ſtruck out, from the cheeks of the roſe; and the ſnowy hue is dropt from the lily. I caſt my eyes toward a magnificent ſeat; but the aſpiring columns, and fair-expanded front, are mingled in rude confuſion. Without the ſun, all the elegance of the blooming world is a *mere blank*; all the ſymmetry of *architecture*, is a *ſhapeleſs heap*.

Is not this an expreſſive emblem of the lovelineſs, which the *Sun of Righteouſneſs* transfuſes into all that is amiable? Was it not for JESUS, and his merits, I ſhould

* 2 *Cor.* iv. 17. The great *Stephens*, that oracle of *Grecian* learning, tranſlates καθ' υπερβολην, *Quo nihil majus dici aut fingi poteſt.* But how does the ſenſe riſe! How is the idea inlarged, under *two* ſuch forcible expreſſions! καθ' υπερβολην εις υπερβολην.—The whole verſe is a maſter-piece of the beautiful *antitheſis*, the lively *deſcription*, and the nervous *diction*. It is one of thoſe exquiſite paſſages in the inſpired writings, which, like ſome rich *aromatic plants*, cannot be tranſferred from their own generous and native ſoil, without being impaired in their vivacity, and loſing much of their delicacy. Perhaps, the following verſion may be ſomewhat leſs injurious to the ſacred original, than the common tranſlation;—*Our very light affliction, which is but juſt for the preſent moment, worketh out a far more exceeding, an incomparably great, and eternal weight of glory.*

ſhould ſigh with anguiſh of ſpirit: even while I rove through ranks of the moſt beautiful flowers, or breathe amidſt a wilderneſs of ſweets. Was it not for JESUS, and his merits; I ſhould roam like ſome *diſconſolate ſpectre*, even through the ſmiles of creation, and the careſſes of fortune. My converſation in this world, though dreſſed in the moſt engaging forms of external pleaſure, would be like the paſſage of a *condemned malefactor*, through enamelled meadows, and bowers of bliſs, to be broke upon the wheel, or to expire on the rack. But a daily reflection, on the LAMB's atoning blood; a comfortable truſt, that my ſoul is reconciled through this divine expiation; this is the ray, the golden ray, which irradiates the face of the univerſe. This is the *oil* of *beauty*, which makes all things wear a chearful aſpect; and the *oil* of *gladneſs*, which diſpoſes the ſpectator to behold them with delight *. This, this is the ſecret charm, which teaches nature, in all her proſpects and all her productions, ſo exquiſitely to pleaſe.

"Man goeth forth to his work, and to his labour, "till the evening." But then his ſtrength fails; his ſpirits flag; and he ſtands in need, not only of ſome reſpite from toil, but of ſome kindly and ſovereign refreſhments.—What an admirable proviſion for this purpoſe, is *ſleep!* Sleep introduces a moſt welcome vacation, both for the ſoul and body. The exerciſes of the brain, and

* Thus applied, that fine piece of *flattery*, addreſſed to the *Heathen* Emperor, is ſtrictly and literally *true*.

——— *Vultus ubi tuus*
Affulſit populo, gratior it dies,
Et ſoles melius nitent. HORAT.

Which I would caſt in a *Chriſtian* mould, and thus tranſlate:

When faith preſents the Saviour's death,
And whiſpers, "This is thine;"
Sweetly my riſing hours advance,
And peacefully decline.
While ſuch my views, the radiant ſun
Sheds a more ſprightly ray;
Each object ſmiles; all nature charms;
I ſing my cares away.

nd the labours of the hand, are at once diſcontinued. So that the weary limbs repair their exhauſted vigour; while the *penſive* thoughts drop their load of ſorrows, nd the *buſy* ones reſt from the fatigue of application. -Moſt reviving cordial! Equally beneficial to our ani-nal and intellectual powers. It ſupplies the fleſhly ma-hine, and keeps all it's nice movements in a proper oſture for eaſy play. It animates the thinking facul-ies with freſh alacrity, and rekindles their ardor for the tudies of the dawn. Without theſe enlivening recruits, ow ſoon would the moſt robuſt conſtitution, be waſted nto a *walking ſkeleton*; and the moſt learned ſage, de-enerate into a *hoary idiot!*—Some time ago, I beheld, ith ſurprize, poor *Florio*. His air was wild; his coun-enance meagre; his thoughts roving, and ſpeech diſ-oncerted. Inquiring the cauſe of this ſtrange altera-ion, I was informed, that for ſeveral nights he had not loſed his eyes in ſleep. For want of which *noble reſto-ative*, that ſprightly youth, (who was once the life of he diſcourſe, and the darling of the company) is be-ome a ſpectacle of miſery and horror.

How many of my fellow-creatures are, at this very nſtant, confined to the bed of languiſhing; and com-laining, with that illuſtrious ſufferer of old, *Wearisome ights are appointed to me*!* Inſtead of indulging ſoft re-oſe, they are counting the tedious hours; telling every riking clock; or meaſuring the very moments, by their robbing pulſe. How many, haraſſed with *pain*, moſt aſſionately long to make ſome little truce with their gonies, in peaceful ſlumbers! How many, ſick with *diſquietude*, and reſtleſs even on their downy pillows, ould purchaſe this tranſient oblivion of their woes, al-oſt at any rate!—That, which wealth cannot pro-ure; which multitudes ſigh for in vain; thy GOD has eſtowed on thee, times out of number. The *welcome viſitant*,

* Job vii. 3.

viſitant, punctual at the needed hour, has entered thy chamber, and poured his poppies round thy couch. Has gently cloſed thy eye-lids, and ſhed his ſlumberous dews over all thy ſenſes.

Since ſleep is ſo abſolutely neceſſary; ſo ineſtimably valuable; obſerve, what a *fine apparatus* Almighty goodneſs has made, to accommodate us with the balmy bleſſing. With how kind a precaution, he removes whatever might obſtruct it's acceſs, or impede it's influence! He draws around us the *curtain* of *darkneſs* which inclines us to a drowſy indolence, and conceals every object, that might too ſtrongly agitate the ſenſes. He conveys *peace* into our *apartments*; and impoſes ſilence, on the whole creation. Every animal is bidden to tread ſoftly, or rather to ceaſe from it's motion, when man is retiring to his repoſe.—May we not diſcern, in this gracious diſpoſition of things, the tender cares of a *nurſing-mother*; who huſhes every noiſe, and ſecludes every diſturbance, when ſhe has laid the child of her love to reſt? *So*, by ſuch ſoothing circumſtances and gently-working opiates, *HE giveth to his beloved ſleep* *.

Another ſignal inſtance of a providence intent upon our welfare, is, that we are preſerved *faſt* in the hour of *ſlumber*. How are we then loſt to all apprehenſion of danger; even though the murderer be at our bed-ſide, or his naked ſword at our breaſt! Deſtitute of all concern for ourſelves, we are unable to *think of*, much more to *provide for*, our own ſecurity. At theſe moments therefore, we lie open to innumerable perils: perils, from the reſiſtleſs rage of flames: perils, from the inſidious artifices of thieves, or the outrageous violence of robbers: perils from the *irregular workings* † of our own

though

* Pſal. cxxvii. 2.

† I think, it is referable only to a ſuperintending, and watchful *Providence*, that we are not hurried into the moſt *pernicious* acti-

houghts, and eſpecially from the incurſions of our ſpi-itual enemy.

What dreadful miſchief might that reſtleſs, that im-lacable *adverſary* of *mankind* work, was there not an nviſible hand to controul his rage, and protect poor ortals! What ſcenes of horror might he repreſent to ur imagination, and "ſcare us with dreams, or ter-"rify us with viſions*!" But the *Keeper* of *Iſrael*, who ever ſlumbers nor ſleeps, interpoſes in our behalf; at nce to *cheriſh* us under his wings, and to *defend* us as ith a ſhield.—It is ſaid of *Solomon*, "That threeſcore "valiant

hen our imagination is heated, and our reaſon ſtupefied by dreams. We have ſometimes heard of unfortunate perſons, who, walking their ſleep, have thrown themſelves headlong from a window, and en daſhed to death on the pebbles. And whence is it, that ſuch aſtrous accidents are only *related* as pieces of news, not *experienced* ourſelves, or our families? Were *our* minds more ſober in their erations, or more circumſpect in their regards? No, verily: No-ing could be more wild, than their excurſions; and none could be re inattentive to their own welfare. Therefore, if *we have laid down, and ſlept* in peace; it was, becauſe the LORD vouchſafed the ſweet refreſhment: if *we roſe again* in ſafety; it was, *becauſe e LORD ſuſtained us* with his unremitted protection.

Will the candid reader excuſe me, if I add a ſhort ſtory; or rather atter of *fact*, ſuitable to the preceding remark?—Two perſons, o had been hunting together in the day, ſlept together the follow-night. One of them was renewing the purſuit in his dream; , having run the whole circle of the chace, came, at laſt, to the of the ſtag. Upon this, he cries out, with a determined ardor, *kill him; I'll kill him:* and immediately feels for the knife, which carried in his pocket. His companion happening to be awake, and ſerving what paſſed, leaped from the bed. Being ſecure from dan-, and the moon ſhining into the room, he ſtood to view the event. hen, to his inexpreſſible ſurprize, the infatuated ſportſman gave eral deadly ſtabs, in the very place, where, a moment before, the eat and the life of his friend lay.—This I mention, as a proof, nothing hinders us, even from being aſſaſſins of *others*, or mur-ers of *ourſelves*, amidſt the mad ſallies of ſleep; only the *preventing* of our heavenly Father.

* What a complete maſter that malignant ſpirit is, in exhibiting *ary repreſentations*, appears from his conduct towards CHRIST, the high mountain: and that he is too ready, if not reſtrained by ver-ruling Power, to employ his dexterity in *afflicting mankind*, is ent from his treatment of *Job*. See *Luke* iv. 5. *Job* vii. 14.

"valiant men were about his bed; all expert in war;
"every one with his ſword upon his thigh, becauſe
"of fear in the night*." But one greater than
Solomon; one mightier than myriads of armed hoſts;
even the great JEHOVAH, in whom is everlaſting
ſtrength; he vouchſafes to *encamp about our houſes*; to
watch over our ſleeping minutes, and to ſtop all the
avenues of ill.—O! the unwearied and condeſcending
goodneſs of our Creator! who *lulls* us to our *reſt*, by
bringing on the ſilent ſhades; and *plants* his own ever-
watchful eye as our *centinel*, while we enjoy the needful
repoſe.

Reaſon, now, reſigns her ſedate office; and *fancy*,
extravagant fancy, leads the mind through a maze of
vanity. The head is crouded with falſe images, and
tantalized with the moſt ridiculous miſapprehenſions
of things. Some, are expatiating amidſt *fairy fields*,
and gathering garlands of viſionary bliſs; while their
bodies are ſtretched on a wiſp of ſtraw, and ſheltered by
the cobwebs of a barn. Others, quite inſenſible of
their rooms of ſtate, are mourning in a doleful *dungeon*,
or ſtruggling with the raging billows. Perhaps, with
haſty ſteps, they climb the craggy cliff; and, with real
anxiety, fly from the imaginary danger. Or elſe,
benumbed with ſudden fear, and finding themſelves
unable to eſcape, they give up at once their hopes
and their efforts; and, though reclined on a couch of
ivory, are ſinking, all helpleſs and diſtreſſed, in the
furious whirlpool. So unaccountable are the *vagaries*
of the *brain*, while ſleep maintains it's dominion over
the limbs!

But is this the only ſeaſon, when abſurd and incoher-
rent irregularities play their magic on our minds? Are
there not thoſe who *dream*, even in their *waking* mo-
ments?—Some pride themſelves in a notion of ſuperior
excellency, becauſe the royal favour has annexed a fe-
ſplend-

* Cant. iii. 7, 8.

splendid titles to their names; or because the dying silkworm has bequeathed her finest threads, to cover their nakedness.—Others congratulate their own signal happiness, because loads of golden lumber are amassed together in their coffers; or promise themselves a most superlative felicity indeed, when some thousands more are added to the useless heap.—Nor are there wanting others, who gape after *substantial* satisfaction from *airy* applause; and flatter themselves with, I know not what, immortality in the momentary buz of renown.—Are any of these a whit more reasonable in their opinions, than the poor ragged wretch in his reveries; who, while snoring under a hedge, exults in the possession of his stately palace, and sumptuous furniture?—If persons, who are *very vassals* to their own *domineering* passions, and led captive by numberless temptations: if these persons pique themselves with a conceit of their liberty, and fancy themselves the *generous* and *gallant* spirits of the age: where is the difference between theirs, and the madman's frenzy; who, though chained to the floor, is throned in thought, and wielding an imaginary sceptre?—In a word; as many as borrow their dignity from a plume of feathers, or the gaudy trappings of fortune; as many as send their souls to seek for bliss in the blandishments of sense, or in any thing short of the divine favour, and a well-grounded hope of the incorruptible inheritance*; what are they, but dreamers with their eyes open; *delirious*, though in *health*?

Would you see their picture, drawn to the very life; and the success of their schemes, calculated with the utmost exactness; cast your eye upon that fine representation, exhibited by the prophet: *It shall be even as when a hungry man dreameth, and behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and his soul is empty: or as when a thirsty man dreameth, and behold he drinketh; but he awaketh,*

U *and*

* These give a sacred, and home-felt delight,
A *sober certainty* of *waking* bliss. MILT. Comus.

and behold, he is faint, and his ſoul hath appetite *. Such is the race, and ſuch the prize, of all thoſe candidates for honour and joy; who run wide from the mark of the high calling of GOD, in CHRIST JESUS. They lie in vanity, and die in woe.—Awaken us, merciful LORD, from thoſe *noon-tide trances!* Awaken us, while conviction may turn to our advantage, and not ſerve only to increaſe our torment. O! let our "eyes be "enlightened, to diſcern the things that are excellent;" and no longer be impoſed upon by fantaſtic appearances, which, however *pompous* they may ſeem, will prove more *empty* than the viſions of the night, more *tranſient* than the dream that is forgotten.

Having mentioned ſleep and dreams, let me once again conſider thoſe remarkable incidents of our frame: ſo very remarkable, that I may venture to call them, a kind of experimental *myſtery*, and little leſs than a ſtanding *miracle*.—Behold the moſt *vigorous conſtitution*, when ſtretched on the bed of eaſe, and totally reſigned to the ſlumbers of the night. It's activity is oppreſſed with fetters of indolence; it's ſtrength is conſigned over to a temporary annihilation; the nerves are like a bow unſtrung, and the whole animal ſyſtem is like a motionleſs log. Behold a perſon of the moſt *delicate ſenſations*, and *amiable diſpoſitions*. His eyes, though thrown wide open, admit not the viſual ray; at leaſt, diſtinguiſh not objects. His ears, with the organs unimpaired, and articulate accents beating upon the drum, perceive not the ſound; at leaſt, apprehend not the meaning. The ſenſes, and their exquiſitely fine feelings, are overwhelmed with an unaccountable ſtupefaction. You call him a *ſocial* creature; but where are his ſocial affections? He knows not the father that begat him; and takes no notice of the friend that is as his own ſoul. The wife of his boſom may expire by his ſide, and he lie more unconcerned than a bar-

* Iſa. xxix. 8.

a barbarian. The children of his body, may be tortured with the ſevereſt pangs; and he, even in the ſame chamber, remain untouched with the leaſt commiſeration.—Behold the moſt *ingenious ſcholar:* whoſe judgment is piercing, and able to trace the moſt intricate difficulties of ſcience; his taſte refined, and quick to reliſh all the beauties of ſentiment and compoſition. Yet, at this juncture, the thinking faculties are unhinged, and the intellectual œconomy quite diſconcerted. Inſtead of cloſe-connected reaſonings, nothing but a diſjointed huddle of abſurd ideas: inſtead of well-digeſted principles, nothing but a diſorderly jumble of crude conceptions. The moſt palpable deluſions, impoſe upon his imagination. The whole night paſſes, and he frequently miſtakes it for a ſingle minute: is not ſenſible of the tranſition, hardly ſenſible of any duration.

Yet, no ſooner does the morning dawn, and daylight enter the room; but this ſtrange inchantment vaniſhes. The man awakes, and finds himſelf *poſſeſſed* of all the valuable endowments; which, for ſeveral hours, were ſuſpended, or loſt. His ſinews are braced, and fit for action. His ſenſes are alert and keen. The romantic viſionary brightens into the maſter of reaſon. The frozen or benumbed affections, melt with tenderneſs, and glow with benevolence; and, what is beyond meaſure ſurpriſing, the intoxicated mind works itſelf ſober, not by *ſlow degrees*; but, in the *twinkling* of an eye, recovers from it's perturbation.—Why does not the ſtupor, which deadens all the nice operations of the animal powers, hold faſt it's poſſeſſion? When the thoughts are once diſadjuſted, why are they not always in confuſion? How is it, that they are rallied in a moment; and, from the wildeſt irregularity, reduced to the moſt orderly array?—From an inactivity, reſembling death; how is the body ſo *ſuddenly* reſtored, to vigour and agility? From extravagancies, border-

ing upon madneſs; how is the underſtanding *inſtantaneouſly* re-eſtabliſhed, in ſedateneſs and harmony?—Surely, "this is the LORD's doing, and it ſhould be "marvellous in our eyes:" ſhould awaken our gratitude, and inſpirit our praiſe.

This is the time, in which *ghoſts* are ſuppoſed to make their appearance. Now, the *timorous imagination* teems with phantoms, and creates numberleſs terrors to itſelf. Now dreary forms, in ſullen ſtate, ſtalk along the gloom; or, ſwifter than lightning, glide acroſs the ſhades. Now, voices more than mortal * are heard from the echoing vaults, and groans iſſue from the hollow tombs. Now, melancholy ſpectres viſit the ruins of antient monaſteries, and frequent the ſolitary dwellings of the dead. They paſs and repaſs, in unſubſtantial images, along the forſaken galleries; or take their determined ſtand, over ſome lamented grave.—How often has the ſchool-boy fetched a long circuit, and trudged many a needleſs ſtep, in order to avoid the haunted church-yard? or, if neceſſity, ſad neceſſity, has obliged him to croſs the ſpot; where *human ſkulls* are lodged below, and the *baleful yews* ſhed ſupernumerary horrors above; a thouſand hideous ſtories ruſh into his memory. Fear adds wings to his feet; he ſcarce touches the ground; dares not once look behind him; and bleſſes his good fortune, if no frightful ſound purred at his heels, if no ghaſtly ſhape bolted upon his ſight.

'Tis ſtrange, to obſerve the exceſſive timidity, which poſſeſſes many people's minds, on this *fanciful occaſion*; while they are void of all concern, on others of the moſt *tremendous import*. Thoſe, who are ſtartled, in any dark and lonely walk, at the *very apprehenſion* of a ſingle ſpectre; are nevertheleſs unimpreſſed at the *ſure proſpect*,

* *Vox quoque per lucos vulgo exaudita ſilentes*
Ingens, & ſimulacra modis pallentia miris
Viſa ſub obſcurum noctis.— VIRG.

ject, of entering into a whole world of diſembodied beings. Nay, are without any emotions of awe, though they know themſelves to be haſtening into the preſence of the great, infinite, and eternal Spirit.—Should ſome pale meſſenger from the regions of the dead, draw back our curtains at the hour of midnight; and, appointing ſome particular place, ſay, as the horrid apparition to *Brutus*, *I'll meet thee there* *: I believe, the boldeſt heart would feel ſomething like a panic; would ſeriouſly think upon the adventure, and be in pain for the event. But, when a voice from heaven cries, in the awakening language of the prophet, *Prepare to meet thy God, O* Iſrael †; how little is the warning regarded! How ſoon is it forgot! Prepoſterous ſtupidity! to be utterly *unconcerned*, where it is the trueſt wiſdom to take the alarm; and to be *all trepidation*, where there is nothing really terrible!—Do thou, my ſoul, remember thy Saviour's admonition; "*I will forewarn you whom* "*you ſhall fear*. Fear not theſe imaginary horrors of "the night. But fear that awful Being; whoſe reve- "lation of himſelf, though with expreſſions of peculiar "mercy, made *Moſes*, his favourite ſervant, tremble "exceedingly. Whoſe manifeſtation, when he appears "with purpoſes of inexorable vengeance, will make "*mighty conquerors*; who were familiar with dangers, "and eſtranged to diſmay; call upon the mountains to "fall on them, and the rocks to cover them. The "menace of whoſe majeſtic eye, when he comes at- "tended with thouſand thouſands of his immortal "hoſts, will make the very heavens cleave aſunder, and "the earth flee away.—O! dread HIS diſpleaſure; "ſecure HIS favour; and then thou may'ſt commit all

* The ſtory of *Brutus*, and his *evil Genius*, is well known. Nor muſt it be denied, that the preciſe words of the ſpectre to the hero were, *I'll meet thee at* Philippi. But, as this would not anſwer my purpoſe, I was obliged to make an alteration, in the circumſtance of place.

† Amos iv. 12.

" thy other anxieties to the wind. Thou may'ſt laugh
" at every other fear."

This brings to my mind a memorable and amazing occurrence, recorded in the book of *Job* *. Which is, I think, no inconſiderable proof of the *real exiſtence* of apparitions †, on ſome *very extraordinary* emergencies; while it diſcountenances thoſe legions of idle tales, which ſuperſtition has raiſed, and credulity received. Since it teaches us, that if, at any time, thoſe viſitants from the unknown world, render themſelves perceivable by mortals, it is not upon any errand of frivolous conſequence; but, to convey intelligences of the utmoſt moment, or to *work impreſſions* of the higheſt advantage.

'Twas in the *dead of night*. All nature lay ſhrouded in darkneſs. Every creature was buried in ſleep. The moſt profound ſilence reigned through the univerſe. In theſe ſolemn moments, *Eliphaz* alone, all wakeful and ſolitary, was muſing upon ſublime and heavenly ſubjects.

* Job iv. 12, 14, &c.

† *Is a proof of the real exiſtence of apparitions.* — If the ſenſe, in which I have always underſtood this paſſage, be true—*Eliphaz*, I apprehend, was neither in a trance, nor in a dream, but perfectly awake—Though he ſpeaks of ſleep; he ſpeaks of it, as fallen not upon *himſelf*, but upon *other* men. He does not mention *dreams*, though *heiumuth*, *ſomnia*, would have ſuited the verſe (if the book be in metre) altogether as well as *hezinuth*, *viſiones*.—It could not, ſurely, be a *wind*, as ſome tranſlate the word *ruhe*. Becauſe, the circumſtance of *ſtanding ſtill*, is not ſo compatible with the nature of a wind; and a wind would have paſſed *above* him, all *around* him, as well as *before* him. Not to add, how low a remark it is, and how unworthy of a place in ſo auguſt a deſcription, that he *could not diſcern the form* of a wind.—It ſeems, therefore, to have been a real ſpirit; either *angelical*, as were thoſe, which preſented themſelves to *Abraham*, reſting at the door of his tent, and to *Lot*, ſitting in the gate of *Sodom*; or elſe, the ſpirit of ſome *departed ſaint*, as in the caſe of *Samuel*'s apparition, or the famous appearance of *Moſes* and *Eliah* on the Mount of Tranſfiguration.—A ſpirit, aſſuming ſome *vehicle* in order to become viſible to the human eye. Which, accordingly, *Eliphaz* ſaw, exhibiting itſelf as an object of ſight. But ſaw ſo obſcurely and indiſtinctly, that he was not able, either to deſcribe it's *aſpect*, or to deſcern *whom* it reſembled.

ſubjects.—When, lo! an awful being, from the inviſible realms, burſt into his apartment *. *A ſpirit paſſed before his face.* Aſtoniſhment ſeized the beholder. His bones ſhivered within him; his fleſh trembled all over him; and the hair of his head ſtood erect with horror. Sudden and unexpected, was the appearance of the phantom; not ſuch it's departure. It *ſtood ſtill*, to preſent itſelf more fully to his view. It made a ſolemn pauſe, to prepare his mind for ſome momentous meſſage.—After which, a voice was heard. A voice, for the importance of it's meaning, worthy to be had in everlaſting remembrance; for the ſolemnity of it's delivery, enough to alarm a heart of ſtone. It ſpoke; and this was the purport of it's words;—"*Shall man, "frail man, be juſt before the mighty GOD? Shall* even "*the moſt accompliſhed of mortals be pure in the ſight of his "Maker* †? *Behold*, and conſider it attentively. *He "put no* ſuch *truſt in his* moſt exalted *ſervants*, as ſhould "beſpeak them incapable of defect. *And his* very *angels*,

* I have given this ſolemn picture a *modern* dreſs, rather for the ſake of variety and illuſtration, than from any apprehenſion of improving the admirable original. Such an attempt, I am ſenſible, would be more abſurdly vain, than to lacquer gold, or paint the diamond. The deſcription, in *Eliphaz*'s own language, is awful and affecting to the laſt degree. A *night piece*, dreſſed in all the circumſtances of the deepeſt horror. I queſtion, whether *Shakeſpeare* himſelf, though ſo peculiarly happy for his great command of terrifying images, has any thing ſuperior or comparable to this. The judges of fine compoſition *ſee* the maſterly ſtrokes; and, I believe, the moſt ordinary reader *feels* them, chilling his blood, and awakening emotions of dread in his mind.

† There ſeems to be a ſignificant and beautiful *gradation* in the *Hebrew* words *Anuſh* and *geber*, which I have endeavoured to preſerve, by a ſort of *paraphraſtic verſion*.—The reader will obſerve a *new* turn given to the ſentiment; preferable, I think, to that which our *Engliſh* tranſlation exhibits. Not, *ſhall man be more juſt than GOD?* But, *ſhall man be juſt before*, or *in the ſight of GOD?* The paſſage, thus rendered, ſpeaks a truth incomparably more weighty, and needful to be inculcated. A truth, exactly parallel to that humbling confeſſion of the prophet, *We are all as an unclean thing*; and to that ſolemn declaration of the Pſalmiſt, *In thy ſight ſhall no man living be juſtified.*

" *gels, he charged with folly*; as ſinking, even in th
" higheſt perfection of their holineſs, infinitely beneat
" his tranſcendent glories; as falling, even in all th
" fidelity of their obedience, inexpreſſibly ſhort of th
" homage due to his adorable Majeſty. If angelic na
" tures muſt not preſume to juſtify, either themſelves
" or their ſervices, before uncreated purity; *how muc*
" *more* abſurd is ſuch a notion, how much more impi
" ous ſuch an attempt, in *them that dwell in houſes o*
" *clay*; whoſe original is from the duſt, and whoſe
" ſtate is all imperfection!"

I would obſerve from hence, the very ſingular neceſſity of that *poverty* of *ſpirit*, which intirely *renounces* it's own attainments; and moſt thankfully *ſubmits* to the righteouſneſs of the incarnate GOD.—To inculcate this leſſon, the Son of the Bleſſed came down from heaven; and preſſed no other principle, with ſo repeated * an importunity, on his hearers. To inſtil the ſame doctrine, the HOLY GHOST touched the lips of the Apoſtles with ſacred eloquence; and made it an eminent part of their commiſſion, " to demoliſh every " high imagination." That no expedient might be wanting, to give it a deep and laſting efficacy on the human mind; a phantom ariſes from the valley of the ſhadow of death, or a teacher deſcends from the habitation of ſpirits.—Whatever then we neglect; let us not neglect to cultivate *this grace*, which has been ſo variouſly taught, ſo powerfully enforced.

Hark! a *doleful voice*—with ſudden ſtarts, and hideous ſcreams, it diſturbs the ſilence of the peaceful night.

* It is well worthy of our obſervation, ſays an excellent commentator, " That no one ſentence uttered by our LORD, is ſo fre-
" quently repeated as this; *Whoſoever ſhall exalt himſelf, ſhall be*
" *abaſed*; *and he that ſhall humble himſelf, ſhall be exalted.*" Which *often* occurs in the Evangeliſts; but is *never* duly accompliſhed in us, till we diſclaim all pretenſion to merit and righteouſneſs of our own, and ſeek them only in the atonement and obedience of JESUS CHRIST.

ight. 'Tis the *ſcreech owl*, ſometimes in frantic, ometimes in diſconſolate accents, uttering her woes*. he flies the vocal grove, and ſhuns the ſociety of all he feathered choir. The blooming gardens, and owery meads, have no charms for her. Obſcene hades, ragged ruins, and walls overgrown with ivy, re her favourite haunts. Above, the mouldering pre-ipice nods, and threatens a fall: below, the toad rawls, or the poiſonous adder hiſſes. The ſprightly norning, which awakens other animals into joy, ad-iniſters no pleaſure to this gloomy recluſe. Even the miling face of day, is her averſion; and all it's lovely cenes, create nothing but uneaſineſs.

So, juſt ſo, would it fare with the *ungodly*; were it oſſible to ſuppoſe their admiſſion, into the chaſte and right abodes of endleſs felicity. They would find no-hing but diſappointment and ſhame, even at the ountain-head of happineſs and honour.—For how ould the tongue, habituated to *profaneneſs*, taſte any elight in the harmonious adorations of heaven? How ould the lips, cankered with *ſlander*, reliſh the rap-ures of everlaſting praiſe? Where would be the ſatis-faction of the *vain* beauty, or the *ſupercilious* grandee? Since, in the temple of the ſkies, no incenſe of flat-ery would be addreſſed to the former; nor any obſe-quious homage paid to the latter.—The ſpotleſs and nconceivable purity of the bleſſed GOD, would *flaſh* onfuſion on the laſcivious eye. The envious mind, muſt be on a *rack* of ſelf-tormenting *paſſions*; to ob-ſerve millions of happy beings, ſhining in all the per-fections of glory, and ſolacing themſelves in the ful-neſs of joy.—In ſhort; the unſanctified ſoul, amidſt holy

* *Solaque culminibus ferali carmine bubo*
Sæpe queri, longaſque in fletum ducere voces.

Thus ſung that charming genius, that prince of the antient poets, that moſt conſummate maſter of elegance and accuracy; all whoſe *ſentiments* are nature, whoſe every *deſcription* is a picture, whoſe whole *language* is muſic—VIRGIL.

holy and triumphant ſpirits; even in the refined re
ons of bliſs and immortality; would be like this m
lancholy bird, *diſlodged* from her darkſome retiremen
and *impriſoned* under the beams of day*.

The voice of this creature ſcreaming at our windo
or of the raven croaking over our houſes, is, they ſa
a *token* of approaching *death*. There are perſons, wh
would regard ſuch an incident, with no ſmall degre
of ſolicitude. Trivial as it is; it would damp the
ſpirits, perhaps, break their reſt.—One cannot b
wonder, that people ſhould ſuffer themſelves to b
affrighted at ſuch *fantaſtical*, and yet be quite unaffec
ed with *real*, preſages of their diſſolution. Real, pre
ſages of this awful event, addreſs us from every quar
ter. What are theſe *incumbent glooms*, which over
whelm the world, but a kind of *pall* provided for nature
and an image of that long night, which will quickl
cover the inhabitants of the whole earth? What a
affinity has the ſleep†, which will very ſoon weig
down my drowſy eye-lids, with that ſtate of intire ceſ
ſation, in which all my ſenſes muſt be laid aſide! Th
ſilent chamber, and the bed of ſlumber, are a very ſig
nificant repreſentation of the land, where all things ar
huſhed; all things are forgotten.—What meant tha
deep *death-bell note*, which, the other evening, ſadden

* I would beg of the reader to obſerve, with what *emphaſis* an
propriety our LORD touches this important point, in his memorable re
ply to *Nicodemus*. *Verily, verily, I ſay unto thee, Except a man b
born again, he* CANNOT *enter into the kingdom of heaven*; q. d. "
"wave the *authority* of the Supreme Judge, and ſpeak with the con
"*deſcenſion* of a teacher in *Iſrael*. Though I might, without being
"liable to the leaſt controul, paſs it into a ſovereign decree; Tha
"unrenewed mortals, who are ſlaves to corrupt appetite, SHALL
"NOT enter the habitations of the juſt; I rather chooſe to repreſen
"it, as a caſe *utterly impoſſible*; and charge the calamity, not upo
"divine ſeverity, but upon human folly. Such perſons, from th
"very nature of things, preclude themſelves; they incapacitate thei
"own minds; and contrarieties muſt be reconciled, before *they*, i
"their unregenerate condition, *can* be partakers of thoſe ſpiritu
"and ſublime delights." *John* iii. 3.

† *Et conſanguineus Lethi ſopor.* VIRG.

the air? Laden with heavieſt accents, it ſtruck r ears, and ſeemed to knock at the door of our arts. Surely, it brought a meſſage to ſurviving ortals, and thus the tidings ran: "Mortals, the deſtroyer of your race is on his way. The laſt enemy has begun the purſuit; and is gaining ground upon you, every moment. His paths are ſtrewed with heaps of ſlain. Even now his javelin has laid one of your neighbours in the duſt; and will ſoon, very ſoon, aim the *inevitable blow* at each of your lives."

We need not go down to the charnel-houſe, nor car our ſearch into the repoſitories of the dead; in or- r to find memorials of our impending doom. A mul- ude of theſe remembrancers are planted in all our aths, and point the heedleſs paſſengers to their long ome. I can hardly enter a conſiderable town, but I eet the funeral proceſſion, or the mourners going out the ſtreets. The *hatchment* ſuſpended on the all, or the *crape* ſtreaming in the air, are ſilent in- mations; that both *rich* and *poor* have been emptying eir houſes, and repleniſhing their ſepulchres. I can arce join in any converſation, but mention is made ſome that are given over by the phyſician, and ho- ering on the confines of eternity; of others, that have ſt dropt their clay amidſt weeping friends, and are one to appear before the Judge of all the Earth. here's not a *news-paper* comes to my hand; but amidſt l it's entertaining narrations, reads ſeveral ſerious *ſtures* of *mortality*. What elſe are the repeated ac- ounts—of age, worn out by ſlow-conſuming ſickneſſes —of youth, daſhed to pieces by ſome ſudden ſtroke of caſualty—of patriots, exchanging their ſeats in the enate, for a lodging in the tomb—of miſers, reſign- g their breath, and (O relentleſs deſtiny!) leaving eir very riches for others? Even the vehicles of our muſement, are regiſters of the deceaſed; and the

voice

voice of *fame* ſeldom ſounds, but in concert with ſ
knell.

Theſe monitors croud every place; not ſo muc
as the ſcenes of our diverſion excepted. What are th
decorations of our public buildings, and the moſt ele
gant furniture of our parlours; but the imagery o
death, and trophies of the tomb? That marble buſt
and thoſe gilded pictures; how ſolemnly they *recogniz*
the fate of others, and ſpeakingly *remind* us of our own
—I ſee, I hear, and O! I feel this great truth. It i
interwoven with my conſtitution. The frequent de
cays of the ſtructure foretel it's final ruin. What ar
all the pains, that have been darted through my limbs
what every diſeaſe, that has aſſaulted my health; bu
the *advanced guards* of the foe? What are the langour
and wearineſs, that attend the labours of each revolvin
day; but the more *ſecret practices* of the adverſary
ſlowly undermining the earthly tabernacle?

Amidſt ſo many notices, ſhall we go on thoughtle
and unconcerned? Can none of theſe prognoſtics,
which are ſure as oracles, awaken our attention, an
engage our circumſpection? *Noah*, 'tis written, *bein*
warned of GOD, prepared an ark. Imitate, my ſoul
imitate this excellent example. Admoniſhed by ſuch
a cloud of witneſſes, be continually putting thyſelf in
a readineſs for the laſt change. Let not that day, o
which thou haſt ſo many infallible ſigns, come upo
thee unawares.—Get the *ivy untwined*, and thy affec
tions diſentangled from this inchanting world; tha
thou may'ſt be able to quit it, without reluctance
Get the dreadful *hand-writing cancelled*, and all thy ſin
blotted out; that thou may'ſt depart in peace, an
have nothing to fear at the deciſive tribunal. Get, O
get thyſelf intereſted in the Redeemer's *merits*, an
transformed into his ſacred *image*; then, ſhalt thou b
meet for the inheritance of Saints in light, and may'
even deſire to be diſſolved, and to be with CHRIST.

Sometimes

Sometimes, in my evening walk, I have heard

——— The wakeful bird
Sing darkling, and, in ſhadieſt covert hid,
Tune her nocturnal note*.

How different the *airs* of this charming ſongſter, from thoſe harſh and boding *outcries!* The little creature ran through all the variations of muſic; and ſhewed herſelf miſtreſs of every grace, which conſtitutes or embelliſhes harmony.—Sometimes, ſhe ſwells a manly throat, and her ſong kindles into ardor. The tone is ſo *bold*, and ſtrikes with ſuch energy, you would imagine the ſprightly ſerenader in the very next thicket. Anon, the ſtrain *languiſhes*, and the mournful warbler melts into tenderneſs. The melancholy notes juſt ſteal upon the ſhades, and faintly touch your ear; or, in ſoft and ſadly-pleaſing accents, they ſeem to die along the diſtant vale. Silence is pleaſed, and night liſtens to the trilling tale.

What an invitation is this, to ſlip away from the thronged city! This coy and modeſt minſtrel, entertains only the *lovers* of *retirement*. Thoſe, who are carouſing over their bowls, or ranting at the riotous club, loſe this feaſt of harmony.— In like manner, the pleaſures of religion, and the joy of reconciliation with GOD; the ſatisfactions ariſing, from an eſtabliſhed intereſt in CHRIST, and from the proſpect of a bliſsful immortality; theſe are all loſt to the mind, that is ever *in the croud*; and dares not, or delights not, to retire into itſelf.—Are we charmed with the nightingale's ſong? Do we wiſh to have it nearer, and hear it oftener? Let us ſeek a renewed heart, and a reſigned will; a conſcience that whiſpers peace, and paſſions that are tuned by grace. Then, ſhall we never want a melody in our own breaſts, far more *muſically pleaſing*, than ſweet *Philomela*'s ſweeteſt ſtrains.

* MILT. *Par. Loſt*, B. III. l. 38.

As different as the voices of these birds, are the *circumstances* of those few persons, who continue awake.—Some are squandering, pearls shall I say, or kingdoms? No; but what is unspeakably more precious, time. Squandering this inestimable talent, with the most senseless and wanton prodigality. Not content with allowing a few *spare minutes*, for the purpose of necessary recreation; they lavish many hours, devote *whole nights*; to that idle diversion of shuffling, ranging, and detaching a set of painted pasteboards.—Others, instead of this busy trifling, act the part of their own tormentors. They even piquet themselves*, and call it amusement; they are torn by wild horses, yet, term it a sport. What else is the *gamester*'s practice? His mind is stretched on the tenter-hooks of anxious suspense, and agitated by the fiercest extremes of hope and fear? While the dice are rattling, his heart is throbbing; his fortune is tottering; and, possibly, at the very next throw, the one sinks in the gulf of ruin, the other is hurried into the rage of distraction.

Some, snatched from the bloom of health, and the lap of plenty, are confined to the *chamber* of *sickness*. Where they are constrained, either to plunge into the everlasting world, in an unprepared condition, or else, (sad alternative!) to think over all the follies of a heedless life, and all the bitterness of approaching death. The disease rages; it baffles the force of medicine; and urges the reluctant wretch, to the brink of the precipice. While furies rouse the conscience, and point at the bottomless pit below.—Perhaps, his *drooping mother*, deprived long ago of the husband of her bosom, and bereft of all her other offspring; is, even now, receiving the blow

* Alluding to a very painful punishment, inflicted on delinquents among the soldiery.

blow which conſummates her calamities*. In vain, ſhe tries to aſſwage the ſorrows of a beloved ſon; in vain, ſhe attempts, with her tender offices, to prolong a life, dearer than her own. He faints in her arms; he bows his head; he ſinks in death. Fatal, doubly fatal, that laſt expiring pang! While it diſlodges the unwilling ſoul, it rends an *only child*, from the yearning embraces of a parent; and tears away the ſupport of her age, from a diſconſolate widow.

While *thoſe* long for a reprieve; *others* invite the ſtroke. Quite weary of the world, with a reſtleſs impatience, they ſigh for diſſolution. Some, pining away under the tedious decays of an incurrable *conſumption*; or gaſping for breath, and almoſt ſuffocated by an inundation of *dropſical* waters. On ſome, a relentleſs *cancer* has faſtened it's envenomed teeth; and is gnawing them, though in the midſt of bodily vigour, in the midſt of pitying friends, gradually to death. Others are on a rack of agonies, by convulſive fits of the *ſtone*. O! how the pain writhes their limbs; how the ſweat bedews their fleſh; and their eye-balls wildly roll! Methinks, the night condoles with theſe her diſtreſſed chil-

* This brings to my mind one of the deepeſt *mourning-pieces* extant in the productions of the pen. The ſacred hiſtorian paints it, in all the ſimplicity of ſtile, yet with all the ſtrength of colouring.—When *JESUS came nigh to the gate of the city, behold! there was a dead man carried out, the only ſon of his mother, and ſhe was a widow.*—What a gradation is here! How pathetically beautiful! Every freſh circumſtance, widens the wound; aggravates the calamity; till the deſcription is worked up into the moſt finiſhed picture of exquiſite and inconſolable diſtreſs.—He was a *young man:* cut off in the flower of life, amidſt a thouſand gay expectations, and ſmiling hopes.—*A* ſon; an *only* ſon; the afflicted mother's all. So that none remained to preſerve the name, or perpetuate the family. What rendered the caſe ſtill more deplorable, *ſhe was a widow:* left intirely deſolate; abandoned to her woes; without any to ſhare her ſorrows, or to comfort her under the irreparable loſs.—Is not this a fine ſketch of the *impaſſioned* and *picturesque?* Who can conſider the narrative, with any attention, and not feel his heart penetrated; with a tender commiſeration? *Luke* vii. 12.

children: and ſheds dewy tears, over their ſorrowful abodes.—But of all mortals, *they* are the moſt exquiſitely miſerable, who groan beneath the preſſure of a *melancholy* mind; or ſmart under the laſhes of a *reſentful* conſcience. Though robed in ermine; or covered with jewels; the ſtate of a ſlave chained to the gallies, or of an exile condemned to the mines, is a perfect paradiſe compared with theirs.

O! that the *votaries* of *mirth*; whoſe life is a continued round of merriment and whim; would beſtow one ſerious reflection, on this *variety* of human *woes!* It might teach them to be leſs enamoured, with the few languid ſweets; that are thinly ſcattered through this vale of tears, and environed with ſuch a multitude of ragged thorns. It might teach them, no longer to dance away their years, with a giddy *rambling impulſe*; but to aſpire, with a determined aim, after thoſe happy regions, where delights, abundant and unembittered, flow.

Can there be circumſtances, which a man of wiſdom would more earneſtly deprecate, than theſe ſeveral inſtances of grievous tribulation? There are; and, what is very aſtoniſhing, they are frequently the deſire, and the choice of thoſe, who fancy themſelves the ſole heirs of happineſs. Thoſe I mean, who are launching out into the depths of *extravagance*, and running exceſſive lengths of *riot*: who are proſtituting their reputation, and ſacrificing their peace, to the gratification of their luſts; ſapping the foundation of their health, in debaucheries; or ſhipwrecking the intereſts of their families, in their bowls. And, what is worſe, are forfeiting the joys of an eternal heaven, for the *ſordid* ſatisfactions of the beaſt; for the *tranſitory* ſenſations of an hour.—Ye ſlaves of appetite, how far am I from envying your groſs ſenſualities, and voluptuous revels! Little, ah! little are you ſenſible; that, while indulgence ſhowers her

her roſes, and luxury diffuſes her odours; they ſcatter *poiſons* alſo, and ſhed unheeded *bane**. Evils, incomparably more malignant, than the wormwood and gall of the ſharpeſt affliction.—Since death is in the drunkard's cup; and worſe than poinards in the harlot's embrace; may it ever be the privilege of the man whom I love, to go without his ſhare of theſe *peſtilent ſweets* †!

Abundance of living ſparks glitter in the lanes, and twinkle under the hedges. I ſuppoſe, they are the *glow-worms*; which have lighted their little lamps, and obtained leave, through the abſence of the ſun, to play a feeble beam. A faint glimmer, juſt ſerves to render them perceivable; without tending at all to diſſipate the ſhades, or making any amends for the departed day. —Should ſome weather-beaten traveller, dropping with wet, and ſhivering with cold, hover round this *mimicry* of *fire*; in order to dry his garments, and warm his benumbed limbs. Should ſome bewildered traveller; groping for his way, in a ſtarleſs night and trackleſs deſart; take one of theſe *languid tapers*, as a light to his feet, and a lantern to his paths. How certainly would both the one, and the other, be fruſtrated of their expectation?—And are *they* more likely to ſucceed, who, neglecting that ſovereign balm, which diſtilled from the croſs; apply any *carnal* diverſion, to heal the anxiety of the mind? Who, deaf to the infallible deciſions of revelation; reſign themſelves over to the erroneous *conjectures* of *reaſon*, in order to find the way that leadeth unto life? Or laſtly, who have recourſe to the *froth* of this vain world, for a ſatisfactory portion, and a ſubſtan-

* Yes; in the flow'rs that wreathe the ſparkling bowl,
Fell adders hiſs, and pois'nous ſerpents roll.

† *Quam ſuave eſt ſuavitatibus iſtis carere!* Was St. *Auguſtine*'s pious exclamation. The ſubſtance of which Mr. *Pope* has expreſſed, with more ſimplicity, and with no leſs dignity:

Count all th' advantage proſp'rous vice attains,
'Tis but what virtue flies from, and diſdains,

tial happineſs? Their conduct is in no degree wiſer; their diſappointment equally ſure; and their miſcarriage infinitely more diſaſtrous. To ſpeak in the delicate language of a ſacred writer, "they ſow the wind, and will "reap the whirlwind *."

To ſpeak more plainly; the pleaſures of the world, which we are *all* ſo prone to doat upon; and the powers of fallen reaſon, which *ſome* are ſo apt to idolize †; are not only vain, but treacherous. Not only a *painted flame*, like theſe ſparkling animals; but much like thoſe unctuous exhalations, which ariſe from the marſhy ground, and often dance before the eyes of the benighted way-faring man. Kindled into a ſort of fire, they perſonate a guide, and ſeem to offer their ſervice: but, blazing with *deluſive light*, miſlead their follower into hidden pits, headlong precipices, and unfathomable gulfs. Where, far from his beloved friends, far from all hopes of ſuccour, the unhappy wanderer is ſwallowed up, and loſt.

Not long ago, we obſerved a very ſurpriſing appearance in the weſtern ſky. A *prodigious ſtar* took it's flaming

* Hoſ. viii. 7.

† I hope, it will be obſerved, That I am far from decrying that noble faculty of reaſon, when exerted in her proper ſphere; when acting in a *deferential ſubordination* to the revealed will of heaven. While ſhe exerciſes her powers, within theſe appointed limits, ſhe is unſpeakably ſerviceable; and cannot be too induſtriouſly cultivated. But, when ſhe ſets up herſelf in *proud contradiſtinction* to the ſacred oracles; when, all-arrogant and ſelf-ſufficient, ſhe ſays to the word of ſcripture, *I have no need of thee*: ſhe is then, I muſt be bold to maintain, not only a glow-worm, but an *ignis fatuus*; not only a bubble, but a ſnare.

May not this remark, with the ſtricteſt propriety; and without the leaſt limitation; be applied to the *generality* of our modern romances, novels, and theatrical entertainments? Theſe are commonly calculated, to inflame a wanton fancy. Or, if conducted with ſo much modeſty, as not to debauch the affections; they pervert the judgment, and bewilder the taſte. By their incredible adventures; their extravagant parade of gallantry; and their characters, widely different from truth and nature; they inſpire fooliſh conceits: beget idle expectations: introduce a diſguſt of genuine hiſtory; and indiſpoſe their admirers, to acquieſce in the *decent* civilities, or to reliſh the ſober ſatisfactions, of common life.

flaming route through thoſe coaſts; and trailed, as it paſſed, a tremendous length of fire, almoſt over half the heavens. Some, I imagine, viewed the portentous ſtranger, with much the ſame anxious amazement; as *Belſhazzar* beheld the hand-writing upon the wall. Some looked upon it as a *bloody* * *flag*; hung out by divine reſentment, over a guilty world. Some read, in it's glaring viſage, the fate of nations, and the fall of kingdoms †. To others, it ſhook, or ſeemed to ſhake *peſtilence* and *war* from it's horrid hair.—For my part, I am not ſo ſuperſtitious as to regard, what every aſtrologer has to prognoſticate; upon the acceſſion of a *comet*, or the projection of it's huge *vapoury train*. Nothing can be more precarious and unjuſtifiable, than to draw ſuch concluſions from ſuch events: Since they neither are preternatural effects, nor do they throw the frame of things into any diſorder. I would rather adore that omnipotent being, who rolled thoſe ſtupendous orbs from his creating hand; and leads them, by his providential eye, through unmeaſurable tracts of æther. Who bids them, now, approach the ſun, and glow with unſufferable ardors ‡; now, retreat to the utmoſt bounds of our planetary ſyſtem, and make their entry among other worlds.

They are harmleſs viſitants. I acquit them from the charge of cauſing, or being acceſſary to, deſolating plagues. Would to GOD, there were no other more formidable indications, of *approaching judgments*, or *impending ruin!* But, alas! when vice becomes predominant,

* — *Liquidâ ſi quando nocte cometæ*
Sanguinei lugubre *rubent*.— VIRG.

† —— —— *Crinemque timendi*
Sideris, & terris mutantem regna *cometam*. LUCAN.

‡ "The comet in the year 1680, according to Sir *Iſaac Newton*'s computation, was, in it's neareſt approach, above 166 times nearer the ſun than the earth is. Conſequently, it's heat was then 28000 times greater than that of ſummer. So that a ball of iron as big as the earth, heated by it, would hardly become cool in 50000 years." DERH. *Aſtr. Theol.* p. 237.

nant, and irreligion almoſt epidemical:- when the ſabbaths of a jealous GOD, are notoriouſly profaned; and that "name, which is great, wonderful, and holy," is proſtituted to the meaneſt, or abuſed to the moſt execrable purpoſes; when the worſhip of our great Creator and preſerver is baniſhed, from many of the moſt *conſpicuous families*; and it is deemed a piece of rude impertinence, ſo much as to mention the gracious Redeemer, in our *genteel interviews*: when it paſſes for an elegant freedom of behaviour, to ridicule the myſteries of chriſtianity; and a ſpecies of refined converſation to taint the air with laſcivious hints; when thoſe, who ſit in the *ſcorner's chair*, ſin with a high hand; and many of thoſe, who wear the *profeſſor's garb*, are deſtitute of the power, and content themſelves with the mere form of godlineſs: when ſuch is the ſtate of a community, there is reaſon, too apparent reaſon, to be horribly afraid. Such *phænomena*, abounding in the moral world, are not fanciful, but real omens. Will not an injured GOD "be avenged on ſuch a nation as this?" Will he not be provoked, to "ſweep it with the beſom "of deſtruction*?"

O! that the inhabitants of *Great-Britain*, would lay theſe alarming conſiderations to heart! The LORD of Hoſts has commanded the ſword of *civil diſcord*, to return into it's ſheath. But have we returned, every one from his *evil ways?* Are we become a renewed people devoted to a dying Saviour; and zealous of good works? —What mean thoſe peals of ſobs, which burſt from the *expiring cattle?* What mean thoſe melancholy moans when

* *Iſa.* xiv. 23. The eternal Sovereign, ſpeaking of *Babylon*, denounces this threatening, *I will ſweep it with the beſom of deſtruction*. —What a noble but dreadful image, is here! How ſtrongly and beautifully pourtrayed! How pregnant alſo in it's ſignification! Intimating the *vile nature*, and expreſſing the *total extirpation*, of this wicked people; at the ſame time, ſuggeſting the *perfect eaſe*, with which the righteous GOD would execute his intended vengeance.

here the lusty droves are wont to low* ? What mean ose arrows of untimely death, discharged on our inno- nt and useful animals ?

No wantonness or sloth, has vitiated the blood of ese laborious temperate creatures. They have con- acted no disease, from unseasonable indulgences, and ordinate revelings. The pure stream is their drink; e simple herb their repast. Neither care disturbs eir sleep, nor passion inflames their breast. Whence en are they visited with such terrible disorders, as no udence can prevent, nor any medicines heal ?—Sure- , these calamities are the weapons of divine displea- re, and manifest chastisements of an evil generation †. urely GOD, the "GOD to whom vengeance belongeth," s still a controversy with our sinful land. And who n tell, where the visitation will end ? What a storm ay follow these preluſive drops ?—O ! that we may hear the rod, and who hath appointed it !" Taught these *penal effects* of our disobedience, may we re- ove the *accursed thing* ‡, from our tents; our practices; r hearts ! May we turn from all ungodliness, before ath come upon us to the uttermost; before iniquity ove our ruin !

Sometimes, at this hour, another most remarkable ht amuses the curious, and alarms the vulgar. A aze of lambent meteors is kindled, or some very ex- aordinary *lights* are refracted, *in the* quarters of the rth.—The streams of radiance, like legions rushing the engagement, meet and mingle; insomuch, that the

* If these papers should be so happy as to out-live their author; per- ps, it may be needful to inform posterity, that the above-mentioned nts, allude to a most terrible, contagious, and mortal *distemper*; raging ong the *horned cattle*, in various parts of the kingdom.

† Hinc *lætis vituli vulgo moriuntur in herbis,*
Et dulces animas plena ad præsepia reddunt.
Balatu hinc *pecorum, & crebris mugitibus amnes,*
Arentesque sonant ripæ, collesque supini. VIRG.

‡ Josh. vi. 18.

the air ſeems to be all conflicting fire. Within a wh
they ſtart from one another; and, like legions in pre
pitate flight, ſweep, each a ſeparate way, through t
firmament. Now, they are quieſcent; anon, they a
thrown into a qivering motion; preſently, the wh
horizon is illuminated with the glancing flames. Som
times, with an aſpect *awfully ludicrous*, they repreſe
extravagant and antic vagaries. At other times, y
would ſuſpect, that ſome inviſible hand was playing
the dumb *artillery* of the *ſkies*; and, by a ſtrange exp
dient, giving us the flaſh without the roar.

The villagers gaze at the ſpectacle, firſt with wond
then with horror. A general *panic* ſeizes the cou
try. Every heart throbs, and every face is pale. T
crouds that flock together, inſtead of diminiſhing, i
creaſe the dread. They catch contagion, from e
other's looks and words; while fear is in every e
and every tongue ſpeaks the language of terror. So
ſee *hideous ſhapes*; armies mixing in fierce encount
or fields ſwimming with blood. Some foreſee *dire*
events; ſtates overthrown, or mighty monarchs tott
ing on their thrones. Others, ſcared with ſtill m
frightful apprehenſions, think of nothing but the *da*
doom. "Sure, ſays one, the unalterable hour is ſtru
"and the end of all things come.—See, replies a
"ther, how the blaſted ſtars look wan! Are not th
"the ſigns of the Son of Man, coming in the clo
"of heaven?—JESUS prepare us (cries a third,
"lifts his eyes in devotion) for the Archangel's tru
"and the great tribunal!"

If this *waving brightneſs*, which plays innocently o
our heads, be ſo amazing to multitudes; what inexp
ſible conſternation muſt overwhelm unthinking mort
when the *general conflagration* commences! The d
the dreadful day, is approaching; "*In the which*
"

heavens *ſhall paſs away with a great noiſe**, *and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat; the earth alſo, and all the works that are therein, ſhall be burnt up.*" That mighty hand, which once opened the windows om on high, and broke up the fountains of the great ep, will then unlock all the *magazines* of *fire*, and our a *ſecond deluge* upon the earth. The vengeful ames, kindled by the breath of the Almighty, ſpread emſelves from the centre to the circumference. Noing can withſtand their impetuoſity; nothing can eape their rage. Univerſal deſolation attends their rogreſs. Magnificent palaces, and ſolemn temples, are id in aſhes. Spacious cities, and impregnable towers, e mingled in one ſmoking maſs. Not only the productions of *human art*, but the works of *almighty power*, e fuel for the devouring element. The everlaſting ountains melt, like the ſnows which cover their ſumit. Even vaſt oceans, ſerve only to augment the inconivable rapidity and fury of the blaze.—O! how ſhall I, r others, ſtand undiſmayed amidſt the glare of a *burng world*; unleſs the LORD JEHOVAH be our defence? ow ſhall we be upheld in ſecurity, when the globe itſelf

* 2 *Pet.* iii. 10. I have often thought this verſe an eminent inance of that kind of beautiful writing, in which the very *ſound* bears ſort of *ſignificancy*; at leaſt, carries an exact correſpondence with e ſenſe. The original expreſſion—ροιζηδον—is one of the hoarſeſt d deepeſt words in language. Nothing could be more exquiſitely apted to affect the *ear*, as well as impreſs the *imagination*, with the reck of nature, and the craſh of a falling world—I ſcarce ever read is clauſe, but it brings to my mind that admired deſcription in ILTON:

—— On a ſudden open fly,
With impetuous recoil, and *jarring ſound*,
Th' infernal doors, and on their hinges *grate*
Harſh thunder.—— Book II. l. 879.

is a pleaſing employ, and a very laudable office of true criticiſm, point out theſe inferior recommendations of the *ſacred Claſſics*. hough, I believe, the inſpired writers themſelves, amidſt all the ration and magnificence of their divine ideas, diſdained a ſcrupulous ention to ſuch *little niceties* of ſtile.

ſelf is ſinking in the *fiery ruin*; unleſs the Rock of ages be our ſupport.

Behold! a new ſpectacle of wonder! The *moon* is making her entry on the eaſtern ſky. See her riſing in clouded majeſty! opening, as it were, and aſſerting her original commiſſion, to *rule over the night*. All grand and ſtately, but ſomewhat ſullied is her aſpect. However, ſhe *brightens*, as ſhe *advances*; and grows clearer as ſhe climbs higher. Till, at length, her ſilver loſes all it's droſs; ſhe unveils her peerleſs light; and becomes "the beauty of heaven, the glory of the ſtars*;" delighting every eye, and chearing the whole world with the brightneſs of her appearance, and the ſoftneſs of her ſplendors.—O! thou queen of the ſhades! may it be my ambition, to follow this thy inſtructive example! While others are fond to tranſcribe the faſhions of little courts, and to mimic perſonages of inferior ſtate; be it mine, to imitate thy *improving purity!* May my conduct become more unblemiſhed, and my temper more refined; as I proceed farther and farther, in my probationary courſe! May every ſordid deſire wear away, and every irregular appetite be gradually loſt; as I make nearer approaches, to the celeſtial manſions!—Will not this be a comfortable evidence, that I too ſhall ſhine in my adored Redeemer's kingdom? Shine, with a *richer* luſtre, than that which radiates from thy reſplendent orb: ſhine, with an *unfading* luſtre, when every ray that beams from thy beauteous ſphere, is totally extinguiſhed?

The day afforded us a variety of entertaining ſights. Theſe were all withdrawn, at the acceſſion of darkneſs. The ſtars, kindly officious, immediately lent us their aid. This ſerved to *alleviate* the frown of night; rather than to *recover* the objects from their obſcurity. A faint ray ſcarce

* Ecclus xliii. 9.

——— *Lucidum cœli decus.* Hor.

ſcarcely reflected, and not from the intire ſurface of things, gave the ſtraining eye a very imperfect glimpſe; ſuch as rather mocked, than ſatisfied viſion.—Now the moon is riſen, and has collected all her beams, the veil is taken off from the countenance of nature. I ſee the recumbent flocks; I ſee the green hedge-rows, though without the feathered choriſters, hopping from ſpray to ſpray. In ſhort, I ſee once again the world's great picture: not indeed in it's late lively colours, but more *delicately ſhaded*, and arrayed in *ſofter charms* *.

What a *majeſtic ſcene* is here! Incomparably grand, and exquiſitely fine!—The moon, like an immenſe cryſtal lamp, pendent in the magnificent cieling of the heavens. The ſtars, like ſo many thouſands of golden tapers, fixed in their azure ſockets. All pouring their luſtre on ſpacious cities, and lofty mountains; glittering on the ocean; gleaming on the foreſt; and opening a proſpect, wide as the eye can glance, more various than fancy can paint †.—We are forward to admire the performances of human art. A landſcape, elegantly deſigned, and executed with a maſterly hand; a piece of ſtatuary, which ſeems, amidſt all the recommendations of exact proportion, and graceful attitude,

* —— —— Now reigns
Full orb'd the moon, and with more pleaſing light
Shadowy ſets off the face of things.— MILT.

† As when the moon, refulgent lamp of night,
O'er heav'n's clear azure ſpreads her ſacred light;
When not a breath diſturbs the deep ſerene,
And not a cloud o'ercaſts the ſolemn ſcene:
Around her throne the vivid planets roll,
And ſtars unnumber'd gild the glowing pole;
O'er the dark trees a yellower verdure ſhed,
And tip with ſilver ev'ry mountain's head;
Then ſhine the vales; the rocks in proſpect riſe;
A flood of glory burſts from all the ſkies;
The conſcious ſwains, rejoicing in the ſight,
Eye the blue vault, and bleſs the uſeful light. Iliad VIII.

I tranſcribe theſe lines, becauſe Mr. *Pope* ſays, they exhibit, in the original, the fineſt *night-piece* in poetry. And, if they are ſo beautiful in *Homer*'s language; who can ſuſpect their ſuffering any diſadvantage, from the pen of his admirable *tranſlator*?

to ſoften into fleſh, and almoſt breathe with life; theſe little *imitations* of nature, we behold with a pleaſing ſurpriſe. And ſhall we be leſs affected, leſs delighted, with the inexpreſſibly noble, and completely finiſhed *original!*— The ample dimenſions of *Ranelagh*'s dome; the gay illuminations of *Vauxhall* grove; I ſhould ſcorn to mention on ſuch an occaſion, were they not the objects of general admiration. Shall we be charmed with thoſe puny eſſays of finite ingenuity; and touched with no tranſport, at this ſtupendous diſplay of omnipotent ſkill? At the auguſt grandeur, and ſhining ſtateline ſs, of the firmament? Which forms an alcove for ten thouſand worlds, and is ornamented with myriads of everlaſting luminaries.—Surely, this muſt betray, not only a total *want* of *religion*; but the moſt abject littleneſs of mind, and the utmoſt *poverty* of *genius*.

The moon, is not barely "an *ornament* in the high "places of the LORD *;" but of ſignal *ſervice* to the inhabitants of the earth.—How uncomfortable is deep, pitchy, total darkneſs! Eſpecially, in the long abſence of the winter's ſun. Welcome therefore, thrice welcome, this auſpicious gift of providence; to enliven the nocturnal gloom, and line with ſilver the raven-coloured mantle of night!—How deſirable to have our ſummer-evenings illuminated! That we may be able to tread the dewy meads, and breathe the delicious fragrance of our gardens; eſpecially, when the ſultry heats render it irkſome and fatiguing, to walk abroad by day.—How chearing to the *ſhepherd*, the uſe of this univerſal lantern; as he tends his fleecy charge, or late conſigns them to their hurdled cots!—How comfortable and how advantageous to the *mariner*, as he ploughs the midnight main; to adjuſt the tackling, to explore his way, and, under the influence of this beaming ſconce, to avoid the fatal rock!—For theſe, and other beneficial purpoſes, the hand of the ALMIGHTY

* Eccluſ xliii. 9.

MIGHTY has hung the *ſtately branch* on high; and filled it with a ſplendor, not confined to a ſingle edifice, or commenſurate to a particular ſquare, but diffuſive as the whole extent of the hemiſphere.

The moſt faithful of our inferior ſervants, are ſometimes tardy in their office; ſometimes negligent of their duty. But this celeſtial attendant is moſt *exactly punctual*, at all the ſtated periods of her miniſtration. If we chooſe to prolong our journey, after the ſun is gone down; the moon, during her whole *increaſe*, is always ready to act in the capacity of a guide. If we are inclined to ſet out very early in the morning; the moon, in her *decreaſe*, prevents the dawn, on purpoſe, to offer her aſſiſtance. And, becauſe it is ſo pleaſant a thing, for the eyes to behold the light; the moon, at her *full*, by a courſe of unintermitted waiting, gives us, as it were, a double day.—How apparently has the divine wiſdom intereſted itſelf, in providing even for the *pleaſurable accommodation* of man! How deſirous, that he ſhould want no piece of commodious furniture; no kind of delightful convenience! And, in proſecution of theſe benevolent intentions, has annexed ſo valuable an appendage to the terreſtrial globe.—Juſtly, therefore, does the pſalmiſt celebrate that admirable conſtitution, which ordained *the moon and the ſtars to govern the night*, as an inſtance of rich goodneſs *and of mercy which endureth for ever* *.

The moon, it is confeſſed, is *no luminous* body. All the brightneſs, which beautifies her countenance, is originally in the ſun, and no more than tranſmiſſively in her. That glorious orb is the parent of day, and the palace of light. From thence, the morning-ſtar gilds her horn †; from thence, the planetary circles are crowned with luſtre; and from thence, the moon

* Pſal. cxxxvi. 9.

† I might, to juſtify this expreſſion, obſerve, that the planet *Venus*, commonly called the morning-ſtar, is found, by our teleſcopes, fre-

derives all her ſilver radiance.—It is pleaſing to reflect, that ſuch is the caſe with the *all-ſufficient Redeemer*, and his *dependent people*. We are repleniſhed from his fulneſs. What do we poſſeſs, which we have not received; and what can we deſire, which we may not expect; from that never-failing ſource of all good? He is the author of our faith, and the former of our graces. In his unſpotted life, we ſee the path; in his meritorious death, the price; and in his triumphant reſurrection, the proof of bliſs and immortality. If we offend, and fall ſeven times a day; he is the LORD our *peace**. If we are depraved, and our beſt deeds very unworthy; he is the LORD our *righteouſneſs* †. If we are blind, and even brutiſh, in heavenly knowledge; he is the LORD our *wiſdom* ‡: His word diſpels the ſhades; his Spirit ſcatters the intellectual gloom; his eye looks our darkneſs into day. In ſhort, we are nothing, and "CHRIST "is all." Worſe than defective in ourſelves, "we are "*complete* in him." So that if we ſhine, it is with delegated rays, and with borrowed light. We act by a ſtrength, and glory in merits, not our own.—O! may we be thoroughly ſenſible of our dependence on the Saviour! May we conſtantly imbibe his propitious beams; and never, by indulging *unbelief*, or backſliding into *folly*, withdraw our ſouls from his benign influences! Leſt we loſe our comfort, and our holineſs; as the fair ruler of the night loſes her ſplendor, when her urn is turned from it's fountain ‖, and receives no more communications of ſolar effulgence.

Th

frequently to appear horned; or to have a *creſcent* of light, ſomewhat like the moon, a little before or after her conjunction. But this would be a remark, too deep and refined for my ſcheme; which proceeds only upon a *ſuperficial* knowledge, and the moſt *obvious* appearances of nature.

* Judg. vi. 23. † Jer. xxiii. 6. ‡ 1 Cor. i. 30.

‖ Alluding to thoſe truly poetical lines in *Milton*,

Hither, as to their fountain, other ſtars
Repairing, in their golden urns draw light. B. VII. l. 36

The moon is inceſſantly *varying*, either in her aſpect, or her ſtages.—Sometimes, ſhe looks full upon us, and her viſage is all luſtre. Sometimes, ſhe appears in profile, and ſhews us only half her inlightened face. Anon, a radiant creſcent but juſt adorns her brow. Soon, it dwindles into a ſlender ſtreak. Till, at length, all her beauty vaniſhes, and ſhe becomes a beamleſs orb.—Sometimes, ſhe riſes with the *deſcending day*; and begins her proceſſion, amidſt admiring multitudes. Ere long, ſhe defers her progreſs till the *midnight watches*; and ſteals unobſerved, upon the ſleeping world.—Sometimes, ſhe juſt enters the edges of the weſtern *horizon*, and drops us a ceremonious viſit. Within a while, ſhe ſets out on her nightly tour, from the oppoſite regions of the eaſt; traverſes the whole *hemiſphere*; and never offers to withdraw, till the more refulgent partner of her ſway renders her preſence unneceſſary.—In a word; ſhe is, while converſant among us, ſtill waxing or waning, and "never continueth in "one ſtay."

Such is the moon; and ſuch are all *ſublunary things*; expoſed to perpetual viciſſitudes.—How often, and how ſoon, have the faint echoes of *renown* ſlept in ſilence, or been converted into the clamours of obloquy! The ſame lips, almoſt with the ſame breath, cry Hoſanna, and crucify.—Have not *riches* confeſſed their notorious treachery, a thouſand and a thouſand times? Either melting away, like ſnow in our hands, by inſenſible degrees; or eſcaping, like a winged priſoner from it's cage, with a precipitate flight.—Have we not known the bridegroom's *cloſet*, an antechamber to the *tomb*; and heard the voice, which ſo lately pronounced the ſparkling pair huſband and wife, proclaim an everlaſting divorce; and ſeal the decree with that ſolemn aſſeveration, "aſhes to aſhes, duſt to duſt?"—Our *friends*, though the medicine of life; our *health*, though the balm of nature; are a moſt precarious poſſeſſion. How

ſoon may the firſt become a corpſe in our arms; an
how eaſily is the laſt deſtroyed in it's vigour!—Yo
have ſeen, no doubt, a ſet of pretty *painted bird*
perching on your trees, or ſporting in your meadow
You was pleaſed with the lovely viſitants, that brough
beauty on their wings, and melody in their throat
But could you inſure the *continuance* of this agreeabl
entertainment? No, truly. At the leaſt diſturbin
noiſe, at the leaſt terrifying appearance, they ſta
from their ſeats; they mount the ſkies; and are gon
in an inſtant, are gone for ever. Would you choo
to have a happineſs, which bears date with their arri
val, and expires at their departure? If you could not b
content with a portion, enjoyable only through ſuch
fortuitous term, not of years, but of moments, O! tak
up with nothing earthly; ſet your affections on thing
above; there alone is "no variableneſs, or ſhadow o
"turning."

Job, is not a more illuſtrious pattern of patience
than an eminent exemplification of this remark.—Vie
him in his *private eſtate*. He heaps up ſilver as th
duſt; he waſhes his ſteps in butter, and the rock pour
him out rivers of oil.—View him in his *public character*
Princes revere his dignity; the aged liſten to his wi
dom; every eye beholds him with delight; ever
tongue loads him with bleſſings.—View him in his *do*
meſtic circumſtances. On one hand, he is defended by
troop of ſons; on the other, adorned with a train o
daughters; and on all ſides, ſurrounded by "a very
"great houſhold."—Never was human felicity ſo con
ſummate; never was *diſaſtrous revolution* ſo ſudden
The lightning, which conſumed his cattle, was no
more terrible, and ſcarce more inſtantaneous. The
joyful parent is bereft of his offspring, and his "chil
"dren are buried in death." The man of affluence i
ſtript of his abundance; and he, who was clothed in
ſcarlet, embraces the dunghill. The venerable patri
arch

arch is the deriſion of ſcoundrels; and the late darling of an indulgent providence, is become "a brother to "dragons, a companion of owls."—Nor need we go back to former ages, for proofs of this afflicting truth. In our times; in all times; the wheel continues the ſame inceſſant whirl. And frequently thoſe, who are triumphing, to-day, in the higheſt *elevations* of joy; to-morrow, are bemoaning the inſtability of mortal affairs, in the very *depths* of miſery*.—Amidſt ſo much fluctuation and uncertainty; how wretched is the condition, which has no anchor of the ſoul, ſure and ſtedfaſt. May thy loving-kindneſs, O GOD, be our preſent treaſure; and thy future glory, our reverſionary inheritance! Then ſhall our happineſs, not be like the full-orbed moon, which is "a light that *decreaſeth* in it's "perfection;" but like the ſun, when he goeth forth in his ſtrength, and knoweth no other change, but that of *ſhining more* and more unto the perfect day.

Methinks, in this ever-varying ſphere, I ſee a repreſentation, not only of our temporal advantages, but alſo of our *ſpiritual accompliſhments*. Such, I am ſure, is what the kind partiality of a friend would call *my righteouſneſs:*

* I believe, I may venture to apply, what the *Temanite* ſays of the affairs of the wicked, to all ſublunary things; as a true deſcription of their very *great inſtability*. *Job* xxii. 16. *Iſudam juſek ne*, rendered by *Schultens*, *Flumen fuſum fundamentum eorum*. *Their foundation* (or what they reckon their moſt ſolid and ſtable poſſeſſion) *is a flood poured out*.—Which is one of the boldeſt images, and moſt poetical beauties, I ever met with in any language, ſacred or profane. In order to have a tolerable conception of the image, and a taſte of it's beauty; you muſt ſuppoſe a *torrent* of waters, ruſhing in broken cataracts, and with impetuous rapidity, from a ſteep and craggy mountain. Then, imagine to yourſelf an *edifice*, built upon the ſurge of this rolling precipice; which has no other baſis, than one of thoſe headlong *whirling waves*. Was there ever ſuch a repreſentation of tranſitory proſperity, tending, with inconceivable ſwiftneſs, unto ruin? Yet ſuch is every form of human felicity, that is not grounded on JESUS, on a participation of his merits, who is the *Rock of Ages*; on JESUS, and his image formed in our hearts, which is the *hope of glory*.

teouſneſs: And ſuch, I am apt to ſuſpect *, is the righteouſneſs of every man living. Now we exerciſe it, in ſome few inſtances; in ſome little degrees. Anon, ſin revives, and leads our ſouls into a tranſient, though unwilling captivity. Now we are *meek*; but ſoon a ruffling accident intervenes, and turns our compoſure into a fretful diſquietude. Now we are *humble*; ſoon we reflect upon ſome inconſiderable or imaginary ſuperiority over others, and a ſudden elatement ſwells our minds. Now, perhaps, we poſſeſs a clean heart, and are warm with holy love. But O! how eaſily is the purity of our affections ſullied; how ſoon the fervour of our gratitude cooled! And is there not ſomething amiſs, even in our beſt moments? Something to be *aſhamed* of, in all we *are*, ſomething to be *repented* of, in all we *do*?

With what gladneſs, therefore, and adoring thankfulneſs, ſhould we "ſubmit to the righteouſneſs of "our incarnate GOD;" and *receive*, as a divine gift, what cannot be *acquired* by human works †!—A writer, of the firſt diſtinction, and niceſt diſcernment, ſtiles the

* I would not be underſtood, as meaſuring, in this reſpect, *others* by *myſelf*; but as taking my eſtimate, from the unerring ſtandard of ſcripture. And indeed, proceeding on this evidence, ſupported by this authority, I might have ventured farther than a bare *ſuſpicion*. For, "there is not a *juſt* man upon earth, that doeth good, and *ſinneth* "*not*;" ſays the Spirit of Inſpiration by *Solomon* (*Eccleſ.* vii. 20.)—Nay, ſuch is the purity, and ſo extenſive are the demands of the divine law, that an apoſtle makes a ſtill more humbling acknowledgment; "In *many* things we offend *all*." (*Jam.* iii. 2.)—And the unerring Teacher, who moſt thoroughly knew our frame, directs the moſt advanced, moſt eſtabliſhed, and moſt watchful chriſtians, to pray daily for the forgiveneſs of their *daily treſpaſſes*.—To which teſtimonies, I beg leave to add an elegant paſſage from the *Canticles*; becauſe, it not only expreſſes the ſentiment of this paragraph, but illuſtrates it by the very ſame ſimilitude: *She* (the church) *is fair as the moon*; *clear as the ſun*. Fair as the moon, the leſſer and changeable light, in her *ſanctification:* Clear as the ſun, the greater and invariable luminary, in her *juſtification*. The inherent holineſs of believers being imperfect, and ſubject to many inequalities; while their imputed righteouſneſs is every way complete, and conſtantly like itſelf. *Cant.* vi. 10.

† Rom. v. 17.—x. 3.

the obedience of our glorious ſurety, an *everlaſting righteouſneſs* *. Such as was ſubject to no interruption, nor obſcured by the leaſt blemiſh; but proceeded always in the ſame uniform tenor, of the moſt ſpotleſs perfection.—This righteouſneſs, in another ſenſe, anſwers the prophet's exalted deſcription; as it's beneficial and ſovereign efficacy knows no end; but laſts through all our life; laſts in the trying hour of death; laſts at the deciſive day of judgment; laſts through every generation; and will laſt to all eternity.

Sometimes, I have ſeen that reſplendent globe *ſtript* of her *radiance*; or, according to the emphatical language of ſcripture, "turned into blood." The earth, interpoſing with it's opake body, intercepted the ſolar rays, and caſt it's own gloomy ſhadow on the moon. The maligant influence gained upon her ſickening orb; extinguiſhed, more and more, the feeble remainders of light; till at length, like one in a *deep ſwoon*, no comelineſs was left in her countenance; ſhe was totally overſpread with darkneſs.—At this juncture, what a multitude of eyes, were gazing upon the rueful ſpectacle! Even of thoſe eyes, which diſregarded the empreſs of the night; or beheld her with indifference; when, robed in glory, and riding in her triumphal chariot, ſhe ſhed a ſofter day through the nations. But now, under theſe circumſtances of diſgrace, they watch her motions with the moſt *prying attention*. In every place, her misfortune is the object of general obſervation; and the prevailing topic of diſcourſe, in every company.

Is it not thus, with regard to *perſons* of *eminence*, in their reſpective ſpheres! Kings, at the head of their ſubjects; nobles, ſurrounded with their dependents; and (after names of ſo much grandeur, may I be allowed to add?) Miniſters labouring among their people;

* Dan. ix. 24.

ple*; are each in a conſpicuous ſtation. Their co
duct in it's *minuteſt* ſtep, eſpecially in any *miſcarri*
will be narrowly ſurveyed, and critically ſcanned. C
there be a louder call, to ponder the paths of th
feet, and to be particularly jealous over all their way
—Thoſe, who move in inferior life, may groſſly o
fend; and little alarm be given; perhaps, no noti
taken. But it is not to be expected, that the leaſt ſl
in their carriage, the leaſt flaw in their character, w
paſs undiſcovered. *Malice*, with her eagle-eyes, will
ſure to diſcern them; while *cenſure*, with her ſhr
trumpet, will be as far from concealing them; as c
lumny, with her treacherous whiſpers, from extenuati
them. A planet may ſink below the horizon; or
ſtar, for ſeveral months, withdraw it's ſhining; a
ſcarce one in ten thouſand perceive the loſs. But,
the moon ſuffers a tranſient eclipſe, almoſt half t
world are ſpectators of her diſhonour.

Very different was the caſe, when, at this late hou
I have taken a ſolitary walk on the *weſtern-cliffs*.
the foot of the ſteep mountain, the ſea, all clear an
ſmooth, ſpread itſelf into an immenſe plain, and he
a watry mirror to the ſkies. Infinite heights abov
the firmament ſtretched it's azure expanſe; beſpangl
with unnumbered ſtars, and adorned with the moo
"walking in brightneſs†." She ſeemed to conte
plate herſelf, with a peculiar pleaſure; while the *tra*
parent ſurface, both received and returned her *fil*
image. Here, inſtead of being covered with ſack-clot
ſhe ſhone with double luſtre; or rather, with a luſt
multiplied, in proportion to the number of beholder
and their various ſituations.

Such, methinks, is the effect of an exemplary b
haviour, in perſons of exalted rank. Their courſ
as it is nobly diſtinguiſhed, ſo it will be happily *influc*
tia

* *Ye are the light of the world. A city that is ſet on a hill, can*
hid. Matt. v. 14. † Job xxxi. 26.

. Others will catch the diffuſive ray; and be am-ious to reſemble a pattern, ſo attracting; ſo com-nding. Their amiable qualities, will not terminate themſelves: but we ſhall ſee them *reflected* from their nilies; their acquaintance; their retainers. Juſt as may now behold another moon; trembling* in the eam; glittering in the canal; and diſplaying it's ely impreſs, on every collection of waters.

The moon, philoſophy ſays, is a ſort of *ſovereign* over *great deep*. Her orb, like a royal ſceptre, ſways the an, and actuates the fluid realms. It ſwells the es, and perpetuates the reciprocal returns of ebb flow. By which means, the liquid element purges it's filth: and is preſerved, from being putrefied lf, and from poiſoning the world.—Is the moon thus *rative* on the vaſt abyſs? And ſhall not the faith of rnal and infinite delights to come, be equally effica-us on this ſoul of mine?—Far above her argent ds, are treaſures of *happineſs*, unſeen by mortal eye; mortal ear unheard; and unconceived by any man imagination. In that deſirable world, the ſt diſtinguiſhed and exalted *honours* alſo are confer-; in compariſon with which, the thrones and dia-ns of earthly monarchs, are empty pageants, and diſh toys.—Yonder arch of ſapphire, with all it's ngles of gold, is but the floor of thoſe divine abodes. at then are the apartments; what is the palace? w bright with glories; how rich with bliſs?

O! ye manſions of bleſſedneſs; ye beauties of my ther's kingdom; which far outſhine theſe lamps of viſible heaven; tranſmit your ſweet and winning itations to my heart. *Attract* and *refine*, all my af-ions. Withdraw them from *ſtagnating*, on the for-ſhores of fleſh; never ſuffer them to ſettle, upon impure lees of ſenſe: but impreſs them with *emo-* of reſtleſs deſire, after ſublime and celeſtial joys.

—Joys,

* *Splendet tremulo ſub lumine pontus.* VIRG.

—Joys, that will proceed, ſtill proceed in a copio and everlaſting flow, when ſeas ſhall ceaſe to roll Joys, that will charm every faculty with unimaginab pleaſure; when the moon, with her waxing ſplendo ſhall chear our ſight no more.

Enough for the preſent evening. My though have been ſufficiently exerciſed, and my ſteps begin be attended with wearineſs. Let me obey the adm nition of nature; and give reſpite to my meditation ſlumber to my eyes.—But ſtay.—Shall I retire to t bed of ſleep, with as little ceremony, and with as mu inattention, as the brutes to their ſordid lair? Are *acknowledgments* due to that divine being, who is t ſupport of my life, and the length of my days? Ha I no farther need of his *protecting* care; no more occ ſion for the bleſſings of his goodneſs?—*Lepidus*, pe haps, may laugh at the bended knee; and have thouſand darts of raillery, ready to diſcharge on t practice of devotion. The wits, I know, are unme cifully ſevere on, what *they* call, the drudgery of pra er, and the fantaſtical rant of praiſe. Theſe they lea to the illiterate labourer, and the mean mechanic; treat them, with a contemptuous ſneer, as the pa ſon's ignoble trade.

Is it then an inſtance of *ſuperſtitious* blindneſs, to d tinguiſh; or of *whimſical* zeal, to celebrate; the m ſupereminent excellency and merit? Is it an *ungrace* buſineſs; or does it argue a *groveling* diſpoſition; magnify goodneſs, tranſcendently rich and diffuſive? What can be ſo truly becoming a *dependent ſtate*, as pay our adoring homage, to the Author of all Perfe tion; and profeſs our devoted allegiance, to the ſupre almighty Governor of the univerſe?—Can any thing m ſignificantly beſpeak an *ingenuous temper*; or adminiſ a more real ſatisfaction to it's fineſt feelings; than t exerciſes of penitential devotion? By which we g vent to an honeſt anguiſh; or melt into filial ſorro

for our insensibility to the best of friends, for our disobedience to the best of parents?—In a word; can there be a more *sublime pleasure*, than to dwell, in fixed contemplation, on the beauties of the eternal mind; the amiable original of all that is fair, grand, and harmonious; the beneficent giver of all that is convenient, comfortable, and useful?—Can there be a more *advantageous employ*, than to present our requests to the Father of mercies; opening our minds to the irradiations of his wisdom, and all the faculties of our souls to the communications of his grace?—It is strange, unaccountably strange, that the notion of *dignity* in sentiment, and the pursuit of *refined* enjoyment, should ever be disunited from devotion: That persons, who make pretensions to an improved taste, and exalted genius, should neglect this most ennobling intercourse, with the wisest and best of beings; the inexhaustible source of honour and joy.

Shall I be deterred, from approaching this source of the purest delight? Deterred from pursuing this highest improvement of my nature? Deterred from all, by a *formidable* banter; or confuted, by one *irrefragable* smile?—No: let the moon, in her resplendent sphere; and yonder pole, with all it's starry train; witness, if I be silent even or morn. If I refrain to kindle in my heart and breathe from my lips, the reasonable incense of praise. Praise to that great and glorious GOD, who formed the earth, and built the skies; who poured from his hand the watery world, and shed the all-surrounding air abroad—"Thou also madest the night, Maker Omnipotent! and thou, the day! Which I, though less "than the least of all thy mercies, have passed in safety, "tranquillity, and comfort.—When I was lost in the "extravagance of dreams, or lay immersed in the insensibility of sleep; thy hand recovered me from the "temporary lethargy. Thy hand set a new, a delicately fine edge, on all my blunted *senses*; and strung "my sinews with recruited vigour. When my thoughts

" were benumbed and ſtupefied, thy quickening influ-
" ence rouſed them into activity; when they were diſ-
" concerted and wild, thy regulating influence reduced
" them into order. Refitting me at once, to reliſh the
" innocent entertainments of an *animal*, and to enjoy
" the ſublime gratifications of a *rational* capacity.—
" When darkneſs covered the creation, at thy command
" the *ſun* aroſe; painted the flowers, and diſtinguiſhed
" every object; gave light to my feet, and gave nature,
" with all her beautiful ſcenes, to my eye.—To thee,
" O thou GOD of my ſtrength, I owe the *continuance* of
" my being, and the *vivacity* of my conſtitution. By
" thy ſacred order, without any conſciouſneſs of mine,
" the wheels of life move, and the crimſon fountain
" plays. *Over-ruled* by thy exquiſite *ſkill*, it transforms
" itſelf, by the niceſt operations of an inexplicable kind
" of chemiſtry, into a variety of the fineſt ſecretions.
" Which glide into the muſcles, and ſwell them for ac-
" tion; or pour themſelves into the fluids, and repair
" their inceſſant decays. Which cauſe chearfulneſs to
" ſparkle in the eye, and health to bloom in the cheek.

" *Diſaſtrous accidents*, injurious to the peace of my
" mind; or fatal to the welfare of my body; beſet my
" paths. But thy faithfulneſs and truth, like an im-
" penetrable ſhield, guarded me all around. Under
" this divine protection, I walked ſecure, amidſt legions
" of *apparent* perils; and paſſed unhurt, through a far
" greater multiplicity of *unſeen* evils. Not one of my
" bones was broken; not a ſingle ſhaft grazed upon my
" eaſe; even when the eye that watched over me, ſaw
" in it's wide ſurvey, *thouſands falling beſide me*, in irre-
" coverable ruin; *and ten thouſands* deeply wounded
" *on my right-hand*.—If ſickneſs has, at any time, ſad-
" dened my chamber, or pain harrowed my fleſh; it
" was a *wholſome* diſcipline; and a *gracious* ſeverity.
" The chaſtiſement proved a ſovereign medicine, to
" cure me of an immoderate fondneſs, for this imper-
" fect

" fect troubleſome ſtate; and to quicken my deſires, af-
" ter the unimbittered enjoyments of my eternal home.
" —Has not thy munificence, unwearied and unbound-
" ed, ſpread my *table*; and furniſhed it, with the fineſt
" wheat; repleniſhed it, with marrow and fatneſs?
" while temperance ſweetened the bowl; appetite ſea-
" ſoned the diſh; contentment and gratitude crowned
" the repaſt.—Has not thy kindneſs, O GOD of the
" families of *Iſrael*, preſerved my affectionate *relations*;
" who ſtudy, by their tender offices, to ſoften every care,
" and heighten every joy? Has not thy kindneſs given
" me valuable *friends*; whoſe preſence is a cordial, to
" chear me in a dejected hour; and whoſe converſation,
" mingles improvement with delight?

" When ſin lay diſguiſed amidſt flowery ſcenes of
" pleaſure; enlightened by thy wiſdom, I *diſcerned* the
" latent miſchief; made reſolute by thy grace, I *ſhun-*
" *ned* the luſcious bane. If, through the impulſe of
" ſenſuality, or the violence of paſſion, I have been
" hurried into the ſnare, and ſtung by the ſerpent; thy
" faithful admonitions, have *recalled* the fooliſh wan-
" derer; while the blood of thy Son, has *healed* his
" deadly wounds.—Some, no doubt, have been cut
" off in the midſt of their iniquities; and tranſmitted,
" from the thrillings of polluted joy, to the agonies of
" eternal deſpair. Whereas, I have been diſtinguiſhed
" by long-ſuffering mercy; and, inſtead of lifting up
" my eyes in torments, to behold a heaven irrecovera-
" bly loſt; I may lift them up under the pleaſing views
" of being admitted, ere long, into thoſe abodes of
" endleſs felicity.—In the mean time, thou haſt vouch-
" ſafed me the *revelation* of thy will; the influences of
" thy *Spirit*; and abundance of the moſt effectual *aids*,
" for advancing in knowledge, and growing in godli-
" neſs: for becoming more conformable to thy image,
" and more meet for thy preſence: for taſting the

" pleaſures of religion, and ſecuring the riches of eter-
" nity.

" How various is thy beneficence, O thou Lover of
" Souls! It has unſealed a thouſand ſources of good;
" opened a thouſand avenues of delight; and heaped
" bleſſings upon me, with a ceaſeleſs liberality. If I
" ſhould attempt to declare them; they would be more
" than the *ſtarry* hoſt, which glitter in this unclouded
" ſky; more than the *dewy* gems, which will adorn the
" face of the morning.

" And ſhall I *forget* the GOD of my ſalvation, the
" Author of all my mercies? Rather let my pulſe for-
" get to beat!—Shall I render him *no* expreſſions of
" thankfulneſs? Then might all nature reproach my
" ingratitude.—Shall I reſt ſatisfied with the *bare* ac-
" knowledgment of my lips? No: let my life be vocal,
" and ſpeak his praiſe, in that only genuine, that moſt
" emphatical language—the language of devout obe-
" dience. Let the *bill* be drawn upon my very heart;
" let all my affections *acknowledge* the draught; and let
" the whole tenour of my actions, in time and through
" eternity, be continually *paying* the debt—the ever-
" pleaſing, ever-growing debt of duty, veneration, and
" love.

" And can I, O thou guide of my goings, and guar-
" dian of all my intereſts—can I *diſtruſt* ſuch ſignal,
" ſuch experienced goodneſs? *Thou haſt been my helper,*
" through all the buſy ſcenes of day: *therefore, under the*
" *ſhadow of thy wings* will I repoſe myſelf, during the
" darkneſs, the danger, and death-like inactivity of
" the night. Whatever defilement I have contracted,
" waſh it thoroughly away, in redeeming blood; and let
" neither the ſinful ſtain, nor the ſinful inclination,
" accompany me to my couch!—Then, ſhall *I lay me*
" *down in peace, and take my reſt*; chearfully referring
" it to thy all-wiſe determination, whether I ſhall open
" my eyes in *this* world, or awake in the unknown re-
" gions of *another*."

CONTEMPLATIONS

ON THE

STARRY HEAVENS.

THIS evening, I exchange the nice retreats of art, for the noble theatre of nature. Inſtead of meaſuring my ſteps, under the *covert* of an arbour; let me range along the *ſummit*, of this gently riſing hill.—There is no need of the leafy ſhade, ſince the ſun has quitted the horizon, and withdrawn his ſcorching beams. But ſee, how advantages and inconveniencies are uſually linked, and chequer our affairs below! If the *annoying heat* ceaſes, the *landſcape*, and it's pleaſing ſcenes, are alſo removed.—The majeſtic caſtle, and the lowly cottage, are vaniſhed together. I have loſt the aſpiring mountain, and it's ruſſet brow; I look round, but to no purpoſe, for the humble vale, and it's flowery lap. The plains whitened with flocks, and the heath yellow with furze, diſappear. The advancing night, has wrapt in darkneſs the long-extended foreſt; and drawn her mantle, over the windings of the ſilver ſtream. I no longer behold

that luxuriant fertility in the fields; that wild magnificence of proſpect, and endleſs variety of images; which have ſo often touched me with delight, and ſtruck me with awe, from this commanding eminence.

The loſs, however, is ſcarcely to be regretted; ſince it is amply compenſated, by the opening beauties of the ſky. Here I enjoy a free view of the whole hemiſphere; without any obſtacle from below, to confine the exploring eye; or any cloud from above, to overcaſt the ſpacious concave. 'Tis true, the lively vermilion, which ſo lately ſtreaked the chambers of the Weſt, is all faded. But the *planets*, one after another, light up their lamps; the *ſtars* advance in their glittering train; a thouſand and a thouſand luminaries, ſhine forth in ſucceſſive ſplendors; and the whole firmament is kindled into the moſt beautiful glow. The blueneſs of the æther, heightened by the ſeaſon of the year, and ſtill more enlivened by the *abſence* of the *moon*, gives thoſe gems of heaven the ſtrongeſt luſtre.

One pleaſure more, the invading gloom has not been able to ſnatch, from my ſenſe. The night rather improves, than deſtroys, the fragrance which exhales from the *blooming beans*. With theſe, the ſides of this ſloping declivity are lined; and with theſe, the balmy zephyrs perfume their wings. Does *Arabia*, from all her ſpicy groves, breathe a more liberal, or a more charming gale of ſweets? And, what is a peculiar recommendation of the rural entertainments, preſented in our happy land, they are alloyed by no apprehenſions of danger. No poiſonous ſerpent lurks under the bloſſom; nor any ravenous beaſt lies ready to ſtart from the thicket.—But, I wander from a far more exalted ſubject. My thoughts, like my affections, are too eaſily diverted from the heavens, and detained by inferior objects. Away, my attention, from theſe little blandiſhments of

the earth; ſince all the *glories* of the *ſky* invite thy regard.

We have taken a turn among the *tombs*, and viewed the ſolemn memorials of the dead: in order to learn the vanity of mortal things, and to break their ſoft inchantment.—We have ſurveyed the *ornaments* of the *garden*; not that the heart might be planted in the parterre, or take root among the flowery race: but that theſe delicacies of the day, might teach us to aſpire after a better paradiſe; where beauty never fades, and delight is ever in the bloom.—A third time we lighted the candle of meditation; and ſought for wiſdom, not in the crouded city, or wrangling ſchools, but in the ſilent and lonely *walks* of antient *night* *.—Let us once more indulge the contemplative vein, and raiſe our ſpeculations to thoſe *ſublimer works* of the great Creator; which the regions of the ſky contain, and this duſky hour unveils †.

If we have diſcerned the touches of his pencil, glowing in the colours of ſpring; if we have ſeen a ſample of his beneficence, exhibited in the ſtores of nature; and a ray of his brightneſs, beaming in the blaze of day; what an infinitely richer field for the diſplay of his perfections, are the heavens! The *heavens*, in the moſt emphatical manner, declare the glory of GOD. The heavens are nobly eloquent of the Deity, and the moſt magnificent heralds of their Maker's praiſe. They ſpeak to the whole univerſe; for there is neither ſpeech ſo *barbarous*, but their language is underſtood; nor nation ſo *diſtant*, but their voices are heard among them ‡.—Let me then, in this ſolemn ſeaſon, formed for

* Referring to the ſeveral ſubjects of the three preceding eſſays.

† Night opes the *nobleſt ſcenes*, and ſheds an awe,
Which gives thoſe venerable ſcenes full weight,
And deep reception in th' entender'd heart.

Night Thoughts, No. IX.

‡ Pſal. xix. 3.

for thought, and a calm intercourſe with heaven; le
me liſten to their ſilent lectures. Perhaps, I may re
ceive ſuch impreſſive manifeſtations of "the eterna
"power and Godhead," as may *ſhed* religion on m
ſoul, while I walk the ſolitary ſhades; and may be
tutelary *friend* to my *virtue*, when the call of buſineſs
and the return of light, expoſe me again to the inroad
of temptation.

The *Iſraelites*, inſtigated by frenzy rather than devo
tion, worſhipped the hoſt of heaven. And the pre
tenders to *judicial aſtrology* talk of, I know not what
myſterious efficacy; in the different aſpect of the ſtars
or the various conjunction and oppoſition of the planets.
—Let thoſe, who are unacquainted with the ſure word
of revelation, give ear to theſe ſons of deluſion, and
dealers in deceit. For my part, it is a queſtion of in
difference to me, whether the conſtellations ſhone with
ſmiles, or loured in frowns, on the hour of my nati
vity. Let CHRIST be my *guard*; and, ſecure in ſuch
a protection, I would laugh at their impotent menaces.
Let CHRIST be my *guide*; and I ſhall ſcorn to aſk, a
well as deſpair of receiving, any predictory information
from ſuch ſenſeleſs maſſes.—What! ſhall "the living
"ſeek to the dead*?" Can theſe bodies advertiſe me
of future events, which are unconſcious of their own ex
iſtence? Shall I have recourſe to dull unintelligent mat
ter, when I may apply to that all-wiſe being; who, with
one comprehenſive glance, diſtinctly views whatever is
lodged in the boſom of immenſity, or forming in the
womb of futurity?—Never, never will I ſearch for any
intimations of my *fate*; but often trace my Creator's
footſteps†, in yonder ſtarry plains. In the former caſe,
they would be teachers of lyes; in the latter, they are
oracles

* Iſa. viii. 19.

† "It is moſt unbecoming (ſays a great author) ſuch imperfect
"creatures as we are, to contemplate the works of GOD, with *that*
"de

racles of truth. In this therefore, this ſenſe only, I rofeſs myſelf the pupil of the ſtars.

The vulgar, are apprehenſive of nothing more, than multitude of *bright ſpangles*, dropt over the æthereal ue. They have no higher notion of theſe fine ap-earances, than that they are ſo many *golden ſtuds*, with hich the empyrean arch is decorated.—But ſtudious inds, that carry a more accurate and ſtrict inquiry nong the celeſtial bodies, bring back advices of a oſt aſtoniſhing import. Let me juſt recollect the oſt material of thoſe *ſtupendous diſcoveries*; in order to rniſh out proper ſubjects for contemplation. And let e unlearned remember, that the ſcene I am going to ſplay, is the workmanſhip of that incomprehenſible OD, who is, "perfect in knowledge, and mighty in power." Whoſe name, whoſe nature, and all whoſe erations, are "great and marvellous." Who ſum-ons into being, with equal eaſe, a ſingle grain, or thouſand worlds.—To this, if we continually advert, e aſſertions, though they will certainly excite our *ad-iration*, need not tranſcend our belief.

The earth is, in fact, a round body; however it may em, in ſome parts, to be ſunk into vales, and raiſed into

deſign, that we may diſcern the manifeſtations of wiſdom in them; and thereby excite in ourſelves thoſe devout affections, and that ſuperlative reſpect, which is the very eſſence of praiſe, as it is a reaſonable and moral ſervice." ABERNETHY *on the Attributes.* And, indeed, if we are ſincerely diſpoſed to employ ourſelves in is excellent, this delightful duty of praiſing the infinite Creator; e *means*, and the *motives*, are both at hand. His works, in a won-rful and inſtructive variety; preſent themſelves; with pregnant nifeſtations of the moſt tranſcendent excellencies of their Maker. ey pour their evidence from all quarters, and into all the avenues the mind. They invite us, eſpecially in the magnificent ſyſtem of e univerſe, to contemplate—*Counſel*, conſummately wiſe; and *Exe-tion*, inimitably perfect:—*Power*, to which nothing is impoſſible; d *Goodneſs*, which extendeth to all, which endureth for ever.—To ve, not a full diſplay, but only ſome *ſlight ſtrictures*, of theſe glorious uths, is the principal ſcope of the following remarks.

into hills*; in other parts, to be ſpread into a ſpac ous plain, extending to the confines of the heavens, terminated by the waters of the ocean.—We may fa cy, that it has deep foundations, and reſts upon ſou prodigiouſly ſolid baſis. But it is *pendent* in the wi tranſpicuous æther; without any viſible cauſe, to u hold it from above, or ſupport it from beneath.—It m ſeem to be ſedentary in it's attitude, and motionleſs it's ſituation. But it is continually *ſailing*, throu the depths of the ſky; and in the ſpace of twel months, finiſhes the mighty voyage. Which periodic rotation, produces the ſeaſons, and completes the ye —As it proceeds in the annual circuit, it *ſpins* upon i own *centre*; and turns it's ſides, alternately to the fou tain of light. By which means, the *day* dawns in hemiſphere; while the night ſucceeds in the oth Without this expedient, one part of it's regions wou during half the great revolution, be ſcorched with ceſſive heat, or languiſh under an unintermitted gla while the other, expoſed to the contrary extrem would be frozen to ice, and buried under a long preſſion of diſmal and deſtructive darkneſs.

I cannot forbear taking notice; that, in this co pound motion of the earth, the one never *interferes* w the other, but both are perfectly *compatible*. Is it thus, with the precepts of religion, and the needful fairs of the preſent life; not excepting even the innoc

* A learned writer, I think, Dr. *Derham*, has ſomewhere an ſervation to this purpoſe—That the loftieſt *ſummits* of hills, and moſt enormous *ridges* of mountains, are no real objection to the g *lar* or round form of the earth. Becauſe, however they may re it, to our limited ſight, vaſtly uneven and protuberant; yet, bear no more proportion to the *intire* ſurface of the terraqueous than a *particle* of duſt, caſually dropt on the mathematician's gl bears to it's whole circumference. Conſequently, the rotund fi is no more deſtroyed in the former caſe, than in the latter.—On ſame principle, I have not thought it neceſſary to take any notic the comparatively ſmall difference, between the *polar* and equa diameter of the earth.

ratifications of our appetites?—Some, I believe, are t to imagine, that they muſt renounce ſociety, if they vote themſelves to CHRIST; and abandon all the tisfactions of *this* world, if they once become zealous ndidates for the felicity of *another*.—But this is a very iſtaken notion, or elſe a very injurious repreſentation, the doctrine, which is according to godlineſs. It was ver intended to drive men into deſarts; but to lead em, through the peaceful and pleaſant paths of wiſ- om, into the bliſsful regions of life eternal. It was ver intended to ſtrike off the wheels of buſineſs, or t in ſunder the ſinews of induſtry; but rather to make en induſtrious from a principle of *conſcience*, not from e inſtigations of *avarice*; that ſo, they may promote eir immortal happineſs, even while they provide for eir temporal maintenance. It has no deſign to extir- te our paſſions, but only to reſtrain their irregularities; ither would it extinguiſh the delights of ſenſe, but vent them from evaporating into vanity, and ſub- ing into gall.—A perſon may be chearful among his ends, and yet joyful in GOD. He may taſte the eets of his earthly eſtate; and, at the ſame time, eriſh his hopes of a nobler inheritance in heaven. e *trader* may proſecute the demands of commerce, thout neglecting to negociate the affairs of his ſal- tion. The *warrior* may wear his ſword; may draw, a juſt cauſe, that murderous weapon; yet be a good dier of JESUS CHRIST, and obtain the crown that deth not away. The *parent* may lay up a competent rtion for his children, and not forfeit his title to the aſures, either of grace or of glory.—So far is chriſ- nity, from obſtructing any valuable intereſt, or with- lding any real pleaſure; that it improves the one, d advances the other. Juſt as the diurnal and an- al motions, are ſo far from *claſhing*, that they intirely ard; and, inſtead of being deſtructive of each other, mutually blending their effects, they give proportion

and

and harmony to time, fertility and innumerable ben
fits to nature.

To us, who dwell on it's ſurface, the earth is by f
the *moſt extenſive* orb, that our eyes can, any-where, b
hold. It is alſo cloathed with verdure; diſtinguiſhed
trees; and adorned with a variety of beautiful decor
tions. Whereas, to a ſpectator placed on one of t
planets, it wears an uniform aſpect; looks all lumi
ous, and *no larger* than a ſpot. To beings, who dwell
ſtill greater diſtances, it intirely diſappears.—Th
which we call, alternately, the morning and the evenin
ſtar; as in one part of her orbit, ſhe rides foremoſt
the proceſſion of night; in the other, uſhers in and a
ticipates the dawn; is a *planetary world*. Which, wi
the four others, that ſo wonderfully vary their myſt
dance, are in themſelves dark bodies, and ſhine only b
reflection; have fields, and ſeas, and ſkies of their ow
are furniſhed with all accommodations for *animal* ſubſi
ence, and are ſuppoſed to be the abodes of *intellect*
life. All which, together with this our earthly habit
tion, are dependent on that grand diſpenſer of divi
munificence, the ſun; receive their light from the di
tribution of his rays, and derive their comforts from h
benign agency.

The *ſun*, which ſeems to perform it's daily ſtag
through the ſky, is, in this reſpect*, *fixed* and im
moveable. 'Tis the great axle of heaven, about whi
the globe we inhabit, and other more ſpacious orb
wheel their ſtated courſes.—The ſun, though ſeeming
ſmaller than the dial it illuminates, is abundant
larger† than this whole *earth*; on which ſo many lof
mountains riſe, and ſuch vaſt oceans roll. A line, e
tendi

* I ſay, *in this reſpect*; that I may not ſeem to forget, or exclu
the revolution of the ſun round it's own axis.

† A hundred thouſand times, according to the *loweſt* reckoni
Sir ISAAC NEWTON computes the ſun to be 900,000 times big
than the earth. *Religious Philoſopher*, p. 749.

tending from ſide to ſide, through the centre of that reſplendent orb, would meaſure more than eight hundred thouſand miles; a girdle, formed to go round it's circumference, would require a length of millions: were it's ſolid contents to be eſtimated, the account would overwhelm our underſtanding, and be almoſt beyond the power of language to expreſs *.—Are we ſtartled at theſe reports of philoſophy? Are we ready to cry out, in a tranſport of ſurprize? How *mighty* is the being, who kindled ſuch a prodigious fire; and keeps alive, from age to age, ſuch an enormous maſs of flame!—Let us attend our philoſophic guides, and we ſhall be brought acquainted with ſpeculations, more enlarged and more amazing.

This ſun, with all it's attendant planets, is but a very little part of the grand machine of the univerſe. Every *ſtar*, though, in appearance, no bigger than the diamond, that glitters upon a lady's ring; is really a *vaſt globe* like the ſun in ſize, and in glory; no leſs ſpacious, no leſs luminous, than the radiant ſource of our day. So that every ſtar is, not barely a world, but the *centre* of a magnificent ſyſtem; has a retinue of worlds, irradiated by it's beams, and revolving round it's attractive influence. All which are loſt, to our ſight, in unmeaſurable wilds of æther.—That the ſtars appear like ſo many diminutive, and ſcarce diſtinguiſhable *points*, is owing to their immenſe and inconceivable diſtance. Immenſe and inconceivable indeed it is; ſince a ball, ſhot from the loaded cannon, and flying with unabated rapidity, muſt travel, at this impetuous

* Dr. DERHAM, after having calculated the dimenſions of the planets, adds, "Amazing as theſe maſſes are, they are all far outdone by that ſtupendous globe of light, the ſun; which as it is the fountain of light and heat, to all the planets about it, ſo doth it far ſurpaſs them all in it's bulk: it's apparent diameter being computed at 822,148 *Engliſh* miles, it's ambit, at 2,582,873 miles, and it's ſolid contents, at 290,971,000,000,000,000." *Aſtro. Theol.* book I. chap. II.

rate, almoſt ſeven hundred thouſand years *, before it could reach the *neareſt* of thoſe twinkling luminaries.

Can any thing be more wonderful, than theſe obſervations? Yes: There are truths, far more ſtupendous; there are ſcenes, far more extenſive. As there is no end of the Almighty Maker's greatneſs; ſo no imagination can ſet limits to his creating hand.—Could you ſoar beyond the moon, and paſs through all the planetary choir: could you wing your way to the higheſt apparent ſtar, and take your ſtand on one of thoſe loftieſt pinnacles of heaven: you would, there, ſee *other ſkies* expanded; *another ſun*, diſtributing his inexhauſtible beams by day; *other ſtars*, that gild the horrors of the alternate night: and *other* †, perhaps nobler *ſyſtems*, eſtabliſhed; eſtabliſhed, in unknown profuſion, through the boundleſs dimenſions of ſpace.—Nor does the dominion of the univerſal ſovereign terminate *there*. Even at the end of this vaſt tour, you would find yourſelf advanced no farther, than the ſuburbs of creation; arrived only at the frontiers of the great JEHOVAH's kingdom ‡.

And

* See *Religious Philoſopher*, p. 819.

† See *Aſtro Theology*, book II. chap. II.—Where the author, having aſſigned various reaſons to ſupport this theory of our *modern aſtronomers*, adds—"Beſides the fore-mentioned ſtrong probabilities, we have "this farther recommendation of ſuch an account of the univerſe, that "it is far *more* magnificent, and worthy of the infinite *Creator*, than "any other of the narrower ſchemes."

‡ *Job*, after a moſt beautiful diſſertation, on the mighty works of GOD; as they are diſtributed through univerſal nature, from the heights of heaven, to the very depths of hell; cloſes the magnificent account with this acknowledgment; *Lo! theſe are parts of his ways*. Or, as the original word more literally ſignifies; and may, I think, be more elegantly rendered; Theſe are only *the ſkirts*, the very outermoſt borders of his works. No more than a ſmall preface to the immenſe volume of the creation.—From the *Hebrew*, *Kezuth*, *extremities*, I cannot forbear thinking, on the extreme and very attenuate *fibres* of the root, when compared with the whole ſubſtance of the *trunk*; or on the exquiſitely ſmall ſize of the *capillary* veſſels, when compared with the whole ſtructure of the body, *Job* xxvi. 14.

And do they tell me; that the ſun, the moon, and all the planets, are but a little part of HIS works? *How great*, then, *are his ſigns! And how mighty are his wonders*!*—And if ſo, what is the CREATOR himſelf! How far exalted above all praiſe! Who is ſo *high*; that he looks down on the higheſt of theſe dazling ſpheres, and ſees even the ſummit of creation in a vale: ſo *great*, that this prodigious extent of ſpace, is but a point in his preſence; and all this confluence of worlds, as the lighteſt atom, that fluctuates in air, and ſports in the meridian ray†.

Thou moſt ſublime and incomprehenſibly glorious GOD, how am I overwhelmed with awe! How ſunk into the loweſt proſtration of mind! When I conſider thy "*excellent greatneſs*," and my own utter inſignificancy!—And have I, exceſſively mean as I am, have I entertained any *conceited apprehenſions* of myſelf? Have I felt the leaſt elatement of thought, in the preſence of ſo majeſtic and adorable a being? How ſhould this wound me with ſorrow, and cover me with confuſion! O my GOD, was I poſſeſſed of all the *high perfections*,

* Dan. iv. 3.

† This puts me in mind of a very fine remark on a ſcriptural beauty; and a ſolid correction of the common tranſlation; made by that learned, ſagacious, and devout expoſitor *Vitringa*.—Iſa. xl. 15. We find it written of the Supreme Being, That *he taketh up the iſles as a very little thing*. Which, our critic obſerves, is neither anſwerable to the import of the original, nor conſonant to the ſtructure of the diſcourſe. The prophet had no intention to inform mankind, what the Almighty could *do*, with regard to the iſlands, if he pleaſed to exert uncontroulable power. His deſign was to ſhew, how inſignificant, or rather what mere nothings *they are*, in his eſteem, and before his Majeſty.—The iſlands, ſays he, though ſo *ſpacious*, as to afford room for the erection of kingdoms, and the abode of nations; though ſo *ſtrong*, as to withſtand, for many thouſands of years, the raging and reiterated aſſaults of the whole watry world; are yet, before the adored JEHOVAH, *ſmall* as the minuteſt grain, which the eye can ſcarce diſcern; *light* as the feathered mote, which the leaſt breath hurries away like a tempeſt.—*Ithul cedeck aigim. Inſulæ ſunt ut leve quid, quod avolat. The* deep-rooted *iſlands are as the volatile atom, which*, by the gentleſt undulations of the air, *is wafted to and fro in perpetual agitation.*

which accompliſh and adorn the angels of light; a-midſt all theſe noble endowments, I would fall down in the *deepeſt abaſement* at thy feet. Loſt in the infinitely ſuperior blaze of thy uncreated glories; I would confeſs myſelf, to be nothing; to be leſs than nothing, and vanity.—How much more ought I to maintain the moſt unfeigned humiliation, before thy Divine Majeſty; who am not only duſt and aſhes, but a compound of ignorance, imperfection, and depravity!

While, beholding this vaſt expanſe, I learn my own extreme meanneſs; I would alſo diſcover the abject littleneſs of all *terreſtrial things*.—What is the earth, with all her oſtentatious ſcenes, compared with this aſtoniſhingly grand furniture of the ſkies? What, but a dim *ſpeck*, hardly perceivable in the map of the univerſe? It is obſerved, by a very judicious writer*, that if the ſun himſelf, which enlightens this part of the creation, was extinguiſhed; and all the hoſt of planetary worlds, which move about him, were annihilated; they would not be miſſed, by an eye that can take in the whole compaſs of nature, any more than a grain of ſand upon the ſea ſhore. The bulk of which they conſiſt, and the ſpace which they occupy, is ſo exceedingly little in compariſon of the whole; that their loſs would ſcarce leave a blank, in the immenſity of God's works.—If then, not our globe only, but this whole ſyſtem, be ſo very diminutive; what is a kingdom, or a county? What are a few *lordſhips*, or the ſo much admired *patrimonies* of thoſe, who are ſtiled wealthy†? When I meaſure them with my own little pittance, they ſwell into proud and bloated dimenſions. But, when I take the univerſe for my ſtandard, how ſcanty is their ſize, how contemptible their figure! They ſhrink into *pompous nothings*‡.

When

* Spect. Vol. VIII. No. 565.

† *Juvat inter ſidera vagantem divitum pavimenta videre, & tua cum auro ſuo terram.* SEN.

‡ *Terrelæ grandia inania.* WATT'S Hor. Lyr.

When the keen-eyed eagle ſoars above all the feathered race, and leaves their very ſight below: when ſhe wings her way, with direct aſcent, up the ſteep of heaven; and, ſteadily gazing on the meridian ſun, accounts it's beaming ſplendors all her own: does ſhe then regard, with any ſolicitude, the *mote* that is flying in the air, or the *duſt* which ſhe ſhook from her feet? And ſhall this eternal mind, which is capable of contemplating it's Creator's glory; which is intended to enjoy the viſions of his countenance; ſhall this *eternal mind*, endued with ſuch great capacities, and made for ſuch exalted ends, be ſo *ignobly ambitious*, as to ſigh for the tinſels of ſtate; or ſo *poorly covetous*, as to graſp after ample territories on a needle's point?—No: under the influence of ſuch conſiderations I feel my ſentiments expand, and my wiſhes acquire a turn of ſublimity. My throbbing deſires after worldly grandeur, die away; and I find myſelf, if not poſſeſſed of power, yet ſuperior to it's charms.—Too long, muſt I own, have my affections been pinioned by vanity, and immured in this earthly clod. But theſe thoughts break the *ſhackles* *. Theſe objects open the door of *liberty*. My ſoul fired by ſuch noble proſpects, weighs anchor from this little nook; and coaſts no longer about it's contracted ſhores; dotes no longer on it's painted ſhells. The *immenſity* of things, is her range; and an *infinity* of bliſs, is her aim.

Behold this immenſe expanſe, and admire the *condeſcenſion* of thy GOD.—In this manner, an inſpired and princely aſtronomer, improved his ſurvey of the nocturnal heavens. *When I conſider thy heavens, even the*

* The ſoul of man was made to walk the ſkies,
Delightful outlet of her priſon here!
There, diſincumbered from her chains, the ties
Of toys terreſtrial, ſhe can rove at large;
There freely can reſpire, dilate, extend,
In full proportion let looſe all her powers.

Night Thoughts, No. IX.

works of thy fingers, the moon and the ſtars which thou ha
ordained; I am ſmitten with wonder at thy glory, an
cry out in a tranſport of gratitude, *LORD, what*
man, that thou art mindful of him? or the ſon of man, tha
thou viſiteſt him †? "How amazing, how charming
"is that divine benignity, which is pleaſed to bo
"down it's ſacred regards, to ſo fooliſh and worthleſs
"creature! Yea, diſdains not, from the height of in
"finite exaltation, to extend it's kind providential care
"to our moſt minute concerns!—This is amazing
"But that the everlaſting Sovereign ſhould give hi
"Son, to be made fleſh, and become our Saviour! Sha
"I call it a *miracle* of condeſcending goodneſs? Rather
"what are all miracles, what are all myſteries, to thi
"ineffable giſt!"

Had the *brighteſt archangel* been commiſſioned t
come down, with the olive-branch of peace in hi
hand, ſignifying his eternal Maker's readineſs to b
reconciled; on our bended knees, with tears of joy
and a torrent of thankfulneſs, we ought to have re
ceived the tranſporting news. But when, inſtead o
ſuch an angelic envoy, he ſends his *only begotten Son*
his Son beyond all thought illuſtrious, to make us th
gracious overture:—ſends him from the "habitatio
"of his holineſs and glory," to put on the *infirmitie*
of mortality, and dwell in a tabernacle of clay:—ſend
him, not barely to make us a tranſient viſit, but to abid
many years in our inferior and miſerable world:—ſend
him, not to exerciſe dominion over monarchs, bu
to wear out his life in the ignoble form of a *ſervant*
and, at laſt, to make his exit under the infamous cha
racter of a *malefactor!* Was ever love like this? Di
ever grace ſtoop ſo low †?—Should the ſun be ſhorn o
a

* Pſal. viii. 3, 4.

† This reminds me of a very noble piece of *ſacred oratory*, wher
in a fine ſeries of the moſt beautiful gradations, the apoſtle diſplay
the admirably condeſcending kindneſs of our Saviour.—*He thought*
no robbery, it was his indiſputable right, *to be equal with* the infinit
fel

all his radiant honours, and degraded into a *clod* of the valleys; ſhould all the dignitaries of heaven be depoſed from their thrones, and degenerate into *inſects* of a day; great, great would be the abaſement. But *nothing* to thine, moſt bleſſed JESUS; *nothing* to thine, thou Prince of peace: when, for us men, and for our ſalvation, thou didſt not abhor the coarſe accommodations of the *manger*; thou didſt not decline even the gloomy horrors of the *grave*.

'Tis well, the ſacred oracles have given this doctrine, the moſt explicit confirmation, and evidence quite inconteſtable. Otherwiſe, a favour ſo undeſerved, ſo unexpected, and rich beyond all imagination, might ſtagger our belief.—Could HE, who launches all theſe planetary globes, through the illimitable void; and leads them on, from age to age, in their extenſive career; could HE reſign his hands, to be *confined* by the girding cord; and his back to be *plowed*, by the bloody ſcourge?—Could HE, who crowns all the ſtars with inextinguiſhable *brightneſs*; be himſelf defiled with *ſpitting*, and disfigured with the thorny ſcar? It is the greateſt of wonders, and yet the ſureſt of truths.

O!

ſelf-exiſtent, immortal *GOD*. *Yet*, in mercy to ſinners, *he emptied himſelf* of the incommunicable honours, *and* laid aſide the robes of incomprehenſible glory.—When he entered upon his mediatorial ſtate, inſtead of acting in the grand capacity of univerſal Sovereign, *he took upon him the form of a ſervant*. And not the form of thoſe miniſtering ſpirits, whoſe duty is dignity itſelf; who are throned, though adoring.—He took not on him the nature of angels, but ſtooped incomparably lower. Aſſumed a body of animated duſt, *and was made in the likeneſs of men*; thoſe inferior *and* depraved creatures.—Aſtoniſhing condeſcenſion! but not ſufficient for the overflowing richneſs of the Redeemer's love. For, *being found in faſhion as a man, he humbled himſelf* farther ſtill. Occupied the loweſt place, where all was low *and* ignoble. He not only ſubmitted to the yoke of the law, but alſo bore the infirmities, and miniſtered to the neceſſities of mortals. He even waſhed the feet of others, and had not where to lay his own head.—Yea, he carried his meritorious humiliation, to the very deepeſt degrees of poſſible abaſement. He *became obedient unto death*—And not to a common or natural death, but a death more infamous than the gibbet; more torturous than the rack; *even the* accurſed *death of the croſs*. Phil. ii. 6, 7, 8.

O! ye mighty orbs, that roll along the ſpaces of the ſky; I wondered, a little while ago, at your vaſt dimenſions, and ample circuits. But now my amazement ceaſes, or rather, is intirely ſwallowed up by a much more ſtupendous ſubject. Methinks, your enormous bulk is ſhrivelled to an *atom*; your prodigious revolutions are contracted to a *ſpan*; while I muſe upon the far more elevated heights, and unfathomable depths; the infinitely more extended lengths, and unlimited breadths, *of* this *love of GOD in CHRIST JESUS**.

Contemplating this ſtately expanſe, I ſee a mirror, which repreſents, in the moſt awful colours, the *heinouſneſs* of human *guilt*.—Ten thouſand volumes; wrote on purpoſe, to diſplay the aggravations of my various acts of diſobedience; could not ſo effectually convince me of their inconceivable enormity, as the conſideration of that *all-glorious perſon* †; who, to make an atonement for them, ſpilt the laſt drop of his blood.—*I have ſinned*, may every child of *Adam* ſay; *and what ſhall I do unto thee, O thou obſerver of men* ‡? Shall I give my firſt-born for my tranſgreſſion, the fruit of my body for the ſin of my ſoul! Vain commutation! and ſuch as would be rejected by the bleſſed GOD, with the utmoſt abhorrence.—Will all the *potentates*, that ſway the ſceptre in a thouſand kingdoms, devote their royal and honoured lives, to reſcue an obnoxious creature from the ſtroke of vengeance? Alas! it muſt coſt more, incomparably more, to expiate the malignity of ſin, and ſave a guilty wretch from hell.—Will all the *principalities* of *heaven* be content to aſſume my nature, and reſign

* Eph. iii. 18, 19.

† *Quo quiſque altius aſcendit in agnitione* CHRISTI, *eo profundius peccati atrocitatem cognoſcet.*

‡ *Job* vii. 20. Not *Preſerver*, as it ſtands in our verſion, but *Obſerver of men.* Which phraſe, as it denotes the exact and inceſſant *inſpection* of the divine eye; as it intimates the abſolute impoſſibility, that any tranſgreſſion ſhould *eſcape* the divine notice; is evidently moſt proper, both to aſſign the *reaſon*, and heighten the *emphaſis* of the context.

gn themſelves to death for my pardon *? Even this, would be too mean a ſatisfaction, for inexorable juſtice; too ſcanty a reparation, of GOD's injured honour. So flagrant is human guilt, that nothing, but a victim of *infinite dignity*, could conſtitute an adequate propitiation.—*He* who ſaid, "let there be light, and there was "light;" let there be a firmament, and immediately the blue curtains floated in the ſky; *He* muſt take fleſh; HE muſt feel the fierce torments of crucifixion; and pour out his ſoul in agonies, if ever ſuch tranſgreſſors are pardoned.

How vaſt is that debt; which all the wealth of both the *Indies* cannot diſcharge! How vitiated that habit of body; which all the drugs produced by nature herſelf, cannot rectify! But how much more *ruined* was thy

* MILTON ſets this thought, in a very poetical and ſtriking light.—All the ſanctities of heaven, ſtand round the throne of the Supreme Majeſty. GOD foreſees and foretels the fall of man; the *ruin*, which will unavoidably enſue on his tranſgreſſion; and the utter *impoſſibility*, of his being able to extricate himſelf, from the abyſs of miſery.

He, with his whole poſterity, muſt die;
Die he, or juſtice muſt; unleſs for him
Some other able, and as willing pay
The rigid ſatisfaction, death for death.

After which affecting repreſentation, intended to raiſe the moſt tender emotions of pity; the following inquiry is addreſſed to all the ſurrounding angels:

Say, heav'nly pow'rs, where ſhall we find ſuch love?
Which of you will be mortal, to redeem
Man's mortal crime? and die, the dead to ſave?
He aſked; but all the heav'nly choir ſtood mute,
And ſilence was in heav'n.—

There is, to me at leaſt, an inimitable ſpirit and beauty in the laſt circumſtance.—That ſuch an innumerable multitude, of generous and compaſſionate beings, ſhould be ſtruck *dumb* with ſurprize and terror, at the very mention of *The deadly forfeiture and ranſom let!* No *language* is ſo eloquent as this *ſilence*. Words could not poſſibly have expreſſed, in ſo emphatical a manner, the *dreadful nature* of the taſk; the *abſolute inability* of any or all creatures to execute it; the ſuper-eminent and *matchleſs love* of the Eternal Son, in undertaking the tremendous work; not only without reluctance, but unſought and unimplored; with readineſs, alacrity, and delight—*Paradiſe Loſt*, B. III. l. 209. Edit. BENTL.

thy condition, O my ſoul! how much more *heinous* were thy crimes! Since nothing leſs than the ſufferings and death, of Meſſiah the Son of GOD, and radiant image of his glory, could effect thy recovery, or cancel thy iniquity.—Though perhaps, thou art not ſunk ſo very deep in pollution, as ſome of the moſt abandoned proſligates; yet remember the ineſtimable ranſom, paid to redeem thee from everlaſting deſtruction. Remember this; and "never open thy mouth any more*," either to *murmur* at the divine chaſtiſements, or to *glory* in thy own attainments. Remember this; and even "*loath* thyſelf† for the multitude of thy provocations," and thy great baſeneſs.

Once more: let me view this beautiful, this magnificent expanſe; and conceive ſome juſter apprehenſions, of the unknown richneſs of my *Saviour's atonement*.—I am informed by a writer who cannot miſtake, that the high-prieſt of my profeſſion, who was alſo the ſacrifice for my ſins, *is higher than the heavens*‡; more exalted in dignity, more bright with glory, than all the heavenly manſions, and all their illuſtrious inhabitants. If my heart was humbled, at the conſideration of it's exceſſive guilt; how do all my drooping powers revive, at this delightful thought? The poor criminal, that ſeemed to be *tottering* on the very brink of the infernal pit; is *raiſed*, by ſuch a belief, even to the portals of paradiſe. My ſelf-abaſement, I truſt, will always continue; but my fears, under the influence of ſuch a conviction, are quite gone§. I do not, I cannot, doubt the efficacy

* Ezek. xvi. 63. † Ezek. xxxvi. 31. ‡ Heb. vii. 26.

§ I am ſorry to find, that ſome of my readers were a little diſguſted at this expreſſion, "*My fears are quite gone.*" As thinking, it diſcovered a tincture of arrogance in the writer, and tended to diſcourage the weak chriſtian. But, I hope, a more mature conſideration will acquit me, from both theſe charges.—For, what has the author ſaid? Only, that at ſome *peculiarly happy* moments, when the Holy Ghoſt bears witneſs of CHRIST in his heart, and he is favoured with a glimpſe

cacy of this propitiation. *While I ſee a* glimpſe of it's matchleſs excellency; and *verily believe* myſelf, intereſted in it's merits; I know not what it is to feel any miſgiving ſuſpicions; but am ſtedfaſt in faith, and joyful through hope.

Be my iniquities like debts of millions of talents, here is more than full payment for all that prodigious ſum. Let the enemy of mankind, and accuſer of the brethren, load me with invectives; this one plea, a *divine Redeemer died*, moſt thoroughly quaſhes every indictment. For, though there be much turpitude, and manifold tranſgreſſions, "there is no condemnation "to thoſe that are in CHRIST JESUS."—Nay, were I chargeable with all the vileſt deeds, which have been committed in every age of the world, by every nation of men; even in this moſt deplorable caſe, I need not ſink into deſpair. Even ſuch guilt, though grievous beyond all expreſſion, is not to be compared with that *abundance* of *grace* and righteouſneſs, which dwell in the incarnate divinity.—How great, how tranſcendently glorious, are the *perfections* of the adored JEHOVAH! So great, ſo ſuperlatively precious, is the *expiation* of the dying JESUS. 'Tis impoſſible for the human mind, to *exalt* this atonement *, too highly; 'tis impoſſible for

glimpſe of the Redeemer's matchleſs excellency—that, in theſe *brighter intervals* of life, his trembling fears, with regard to the deciſive ſentence of the great tribunal, are turned into pleaſing expectations. And what is there in ſuch a declaration, offenſive to the *ſtricteſt* modeſty, or diſpiriting to the *weakeſt* believer? Inſtead of creating diſcouragement, it points out the way to obtain a ſettled tranquillity. It's natural tendency is, to engage the ſerious mind in a more conſtant and attentive meditation, on the unknown merits of the Divine MEDIATOR. And were we more *thoroughly* acquainted, more *deeply* affected, with his unutterable dignity; I am perſuaded, our uneaſy apprehenſions would *proportionably* vaniſh; our faith be eſtabliſhed, our hopes brightened, and our joys inlarged.

* This doctrine, though rich with *conſolation* to the ruined ſinner; yet, is it not likely to open a door for *licentiouſneſs*; and embolden tranſgreſſors to proſecute their VICES?—No: it is the moſt powerful

for the HUMBLE PENITENT, to *confide* in it, too ſted-
dily. The ſcriptures, the ſcriptures of eternal truth
have ſaid it (exult, my ſoul, in the belief of it!) tha
the blood on which we rely, is GOD's *own blood**; an
therefore all-ſufficient to expiate, omnipotent to ſave.

David, that egregious ſinner, but more exemplar
ſaint, ſeems to have been well acquainted with this com
fortable truth. What elſe can be the import of that ver
remarkable, but moſt devout declaration? *Thou ſhal
purge me† with hyſſop, and I ſhall be clean: thou ſha
waſh me, and I ſhall be whiter than ſnow.*—" I have bee
" guilty, I muſt confeſs, of the moſt complicated an
" ſhocking crimes: crimes, inflamed by every aggravat
" ing circumſtance, with regard to myſelf, my neigh
" bour, and my GOD. *Myſelf*, who have been bleſſe
" above men, and the diſtinguiſhed favourite of provi
" dence; *my neighbour*, who, in the moſt dear and ten
" der intereſts, has been irreparably injured; *my GOD*
" who might juſtly expect the moſt grateful returns o
" duty, inſtead of ſuch enormous violations of his law
" Yet, all horrid and execrable as *my offence* is, it i
" nothing to the ſuperabundant merit of that *great Re
" deemer*, who was promiſed from the foundations o
" the world; in whom all my fathers truſted; who i
" the hope of all the ends of the earth. Though my
" con

ful motive to that genuine repentance, which *flows* from an unfeigne
love of GOD; and *operates* in a hearty deteſtation of all ſin. One, wh
knew the unmeaſurable goodneſs of the LORD, and was no ſtrange
to the ſinful perverſeneſs of our nature, ſays, *There is mercy with thee*
THEREFORE *ſhalt thou be feared*, Pſal. cxxx. 4.—Words, ful
to my purpoſe; which at once add the *higheſt* authority to this ſen
timent, and direct our minds to it's proper influence, and due im
provement.

* Acts xx. 28.

† *Pſal.* li. 7. *Thou ſhalt purge.* I prefer this tranſlation, befor
the new one. Becauſe this ſpeaks the language of a more ſtedfaſt be
lief, and gives the higheſt honour to the divine goodneſs. Were th
words intended to bear no more than the common *petitionary* ſenſe
and not to be expreſſive of a noble *pierophory* of faith; they would ra
ther have been *hethani* and *bebeſeni*; *imperatives*, not *futures*.

" conſcience be more loathſome, with adulterous im-
" purity, than the *dunghill*; though treachery and mur-
" der have rendered it even black as the gloom of *hell*;
" yet, waſhed in the ' fountain opened for ſin and for
" uncleanneſs *,' I ſhall be—I ſay not, pure only, this
" were a diſparagement to the efficacy of my Saviour's
" death; but I ſhall be fair as the *lily*, and white as
" the *ſnow*. Nay, let me not derogate from the glori-
" ous object of my confidence; cleanſed by this ſove-
" reign ſanctifying ſtream, I ſhall be *fairer* than the
" full-blown lily, *whiter* than the new-fallen ſnows."

Power, ſaith the ſcripture, *belongeth unto GOD* †.—And in what majeſtic lines, is this attribute of JEHOVAH written, throughout the whole volume of the creation? Eſpecially, through thoſe magnificent pages, unfolded in yonder ſtarry regions. Which are therefore ſtiled, by the ſweet and ſeraphic ſinger of *Iſrael*, " the firmament of his power ‡." Becauſe, the grand *exploits* of *omnipotence* are there diſplayed, with the utmoſt pomp; and recorded, in the moſt legible characters.

Who, that looks upward to the midnight ſky; and, with an eye of reaſon, beholds it's rolling wonders, who can forbear inquiring, of *what* were thoſe mighty orbs *formed?*—Amazing to relate! They were produced without materials. They ſprung from emptineſs itſelf. The ſtately fabric of univerſal nature emerged out of *nothing*. What *inſtruments* were uſed by the ſupreme architect, to faſhion the parts with ſuch exquiſite niceneſs, and give ſo beautiful a poliſh to the whole? How was all connected into one finely-proportioned, and nobly-finiſhed ſtructure?—A *bare fiat* accompliſhed all. LET THEM BE, ſaid GOD. He added no more; and immediately the marvellous edifice aroſe; adorned with every beauty; diſplaying innumerable perfections;

* Zech. xiii. 1. † Pſal. lxii. 11. ‡ Pſal. cl. 1.

and declaring, amidſt enraptur'd ſeraphs, it's great Creator's praiſe. "By the *word* of the LORD were the "heavens made, and all the hoſt of them by the *breath* "of his mouth *."—What forceful machinery *fixed* ſome of thoſe ponderous globes, on an immoveable baſis? What irreſiſtible impulſe *bowled* others, through the circuit of the heavens? What coercive energy *confined* their impetuous courſes, within limits aſtoniſhingly large, yet moſt minutely true?—Nothing but his *ſovereign will*. For all things were at firſt conſtituted, and all to this day abide, "according to his or-"dinance."

Without any toilſome aſſiduity or laborious proceſs, to raiſe—to touch—to *ſpeak* ſuch a multitude of immenſe bodies into being—to *launch* them through the ſpaces of the ſky, as an arrow from the hand of a giant—to impreſs on ſuch *unwieldy* maſſes a motion, far outſtripping the ſwiftneſs of the winged creation †—and

* If this thought is admitted a ſecond time, and ſuffered to ennoble the next paragraph; it is partly, becauſe of it's unequalled *ſublimity*; partly, becauſe it awakens the moſt *grand* idea of creating power; and partly, becauſe the practice of the *Pſalmiſt*, an authority too great to be controverted, is my precedent.—The beautiful ſtanza quoted from *Pſal.* xxxiii. 6. is a proof, how thoroughly the royal Poet entered into the majeſty of the *Moſaic* narration. The repetition of the ſentiment, *ver.* 9. intimates, how peculiarly he was charmed, with that *noble manner*, of deſcribing the divine operations. While the turn of his own compoſition ſhews, how perfectly he poſſeſſed the ſame *elevated way* of thinking. And this long before *Longinus* wrote the celebrated treatiſe, which has taught the heathen as well as the chriſtian world, to admire the *dignity* of the *Jewiſh* legiſlator's ſtile. *Vid.* LONGIN. *de Sublim.* Sect. IX.

† To give *one* inſtance of this remark.—The earth, in the diurnal revolution, which it performs on it's own axis, *whirls about* at the rate of above a thouſand miles an hour. And as the great orbit which it deſcribes annually round the ſun, is reckoned at 540 millions of miles, it muſt *travel* near a million and half, each day.—What a *force* muſt be requiſite, to protrude ſo vaſt a globe; and whe it on, loaded as it is with huge mountains, and ponderous rocks, ſuch a prodigious degree of rapidity! It ſurpaſſes human conception.—How natural, how pertinent, how almoſt neceſſary, after ſuch obſervation, is the acknowledgment made by holy *Job! I know th*

Tho

—and to *continue* them in the ſame rapid whirl, for thouſands and thouſands of years—What an amazing inſtance of infinite might is this!—Can any thing be impoſſible to the LORD, the LORD GOD; the Creator and Controuler, of all the ends of the earth, all the regions of the univerſe? Rather, is not all that we count *difficult*, perfect eaſe to that glorious being, who only ſpake, and the world was made *? Who only gave command, and the ſtupendous axle was lodged faſt, the lofty wheels moved complete?—What a ſure defence, O my ſoul, is this everlaſting ſtrength of thy GOD? Be this thy continual *refuge*, in the article of danger; this thy never-failing *reſource*, in every time of need.

What cannot this uncontroulable power, of the great JEHOVAH, effect for his people? Be their miſeries ever ſo galling, cannot this GOD relieve them? Be their wants ever ſo numerous, cannot this GOD ſupply them? Be their corruptions within, ever ſo inveterate; or their temptations without, ever ſo importunate; cannot this mighty, mighty GOD, ſubdue the former, and fortify them againſt the latter?—Should *trials*, with an inceſſant vehemence, ſift thee as wheat; ſhould *tribulation*, with a weight of woes, almoſt grind thee to powder; ſhould *pleaſure*, with her bewitching ſmiles, ſolicit thee to delicious ruin; yet "hold thee faſt by "GOD," and lay thy help upon him, that is omnipotent†. Thou canſt not be involved in ſuch calamitous circumſtances, or expoſed to ſuch iminent peril;

THOU *canſt do every thing, and that no thought*, no imaginable ſcheme, *can be with-holden from thee*, can lie beyond thy power to execute. Chap. xlii. 2.

* Pſal. xxxiii. 9.

† It is a moſt charming deſcription, as well as a moſt comfortable promiſe, which we find in *Iſaiah* xl. 29, 30, 31.—*HE giveth power to the feeble*; *and to them that have no might* at all, *He* not only imparteth, but *increaſeth ſtrength*; making it to abound, where it did not

but thy GOD, whom thou ſerveſt, is able to deliver thee from one, and to ſupport thee under the other.—To *ſupport!* to *deliver!* Let me not diſhonour the unlimited greatneſs of his power. He is able to exalt thee, from the deepeſt diſtreſs, to the moſt triumphant joy; and to make even a complication of evils, work together for thy everlaſting good. *He is able*, not only to accompliſh what I have been ſpeaking, but *to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can aſk, or think* *.

O!

not ſo much as exiſt.—Without this aid of JEHOVAH, *even the youths*, amidſt the very prime of their vigour and activity, *ſhall become languid* in their work, *and weary* in their courſe. *And the young men*, to whoſe reſolution and abilities nothing ſeemed impracticable, *ſhall* not only not ſucceed, but *utterly fall*, and miſcarry in their various enterprizes.—*Whereas, they that wait upon the LORD*, and confide in his grace, ſhall paſs on, with a generous ardour, from one degree of religious improvement to another. Inſtead of exhauſting, they *ſhall renew their ſtrength*; difficulties ſhall animate, and toil invigorate them. *They ſhall mount up*, as *with* ſoaring *wings*, above all oppoſition; they ſhall be carried through every diſcouragement, *as eagles* cleave the yielding air. *They ſhall run*, with ſpeed and alacrity, the way of GOD's commandments, *and not be weary: they ſhall hold on* (*ilki, progredientur, carpent iter*) with conſtancy and perſeverance, in thoſe peaceful paths, *and not faint*; but arrive at the end of their progreſs, and receive the prize of their high calling.

To this moſt chearing doctrine, permit me to add it's no leſs beautiful and delightful *contraſt*. *Eliphaz*, ſpeaking of the enemies of the righteous, ſays—*Kimnu nekhad la*—which is rendered, by a great critic in ſacred learning, *Nihil exciſum factio nobis adverſaria.*—We ſhould reckon, our language acquitted itſelf tolerably well, if, when depreciating the abilities of an adverſary, it ſhould repreſent them as weak as the *ſcorched thread*, feeble as the *diſſolving ſmoke*. But theſe are cold forms of ſpeech, compared with the eloquence of the Eaſt. According to the genius of our Bible, *All the power that oppoſes the godly, is* a mere nothing; or, to ſpeak with a more emphatical air of contempt, *a deſtroyed, an extirpated nothing.*—Admire this expreſſion, ye that are charmed with daring images, and (what *Tully* calls *verbum ardens*) a ſpirited and glowing diction.—Remember, this declaration, ye that fight the good fight of faith. The united force of all your enemies, be it ever ſo formidable to the eye of fleſh, is, before your Almighty Guardian, *Nihil nihiliſſimum*, not only nothing but *leſs than nothing*, and vanity. *Job* xxii. 20.

* I ſhould, in this place, avoid ſwelling the notes any farther, was it not to take notice of the inimitable paſſage quoted above, and to

O! the *wretched condition* of the wicked, who have this LORD of all power for their enemy! O! the *deſperate madneſs* of the ungodly, who provoke the Almighty to jealouſy!—Beſotted creatures! are you able to contend with your Maker, and enter the liſts againſt incenſed omnipotence? Can you *bear* the fierceneſs of his wrath, or ſuſtain the vengeance of his lifted arm? At his preſence, though awfully ſerene, the hills melt like wax, and the "mountains ſkip like "frighted lambs." At the leaſt intimation of his diſpleaſure, the foundations of nature rock, and the "pil-"lars of heaven tremble." How then can a withered leaf endure, when "his lips are full of indignation, "and his tongue as a devouring fire?"—Or can any thing *ſcreen* a guilty worm, when the great and terrible GOD ſhall *whet his glittering ſword, and his hand take hold on* inexorable *judgment?* When *that hand*, which ſhoots the planets, maſſes of exceſſive bulk*, with ſuch ſurpriſing rapidity, through the ſky: *that hand*, which darts the comets to ſuch unmeaſurable

be found *Eph.* iii. 20.—Which, if I do not greatly miſtake, is the moſt complete repreſentation of divine Power, that it is poſſible for words to frame.—To do all that our tongue can *aſk*, is a miracle of might. But we often think more than we can expreſs, and are acquainted with "*groanings unutterable.*" Yet, to anſwer theſe vaſt deſires, is not beyond the accompliſhment of our heavenly Father.—Nay, to make his gifts and his bleſſings commenſurate to the *largeſt ſtretch* of human expectations, is a ſmall thing with the GOD of glory. He is able to do *above all*, that the moſt inlarged apprehenſion can imagine; yea, to do *abundantly* more, *exceeding abundantly* more, than the mind itſelf, in the utmoſt exertion of all it's faculties, is capable of *wiſhing*, or knows how to *conceive*.

* One of the planets (*Saturn*) is ſuppoſed to be more than 90 times as big, as the globe on which we live. According to the ſame calculation, the largeſt of the planets (*Jupiter*) is above 200 times greater, than this vaſt collection of ſpacious foreſts, towering mountains, extenſive continents, and boundleſs oceans.—Such enormous magnitude! winged with ſuch prodigious ſpeed!—It raiſes aſtoniſhment beyond expreſſion—*With GOD is terrible majeſty!* Job xxxvii. 22.—*Who ſhall not fear* THEE, O LORD, *and glorify thy name?* Rev. xv. 4.

diſtances, beyond the orbit of our remoteſt planet, beyond the purſuit of the ſtrongeſt eye: when THAT HAND is ſtretched out to puniſh, can the munition of rocks, the intervention of ſeas, or even interpoſing worlds, divert the blow?—Conſider this, *ambition*; and bow thy haughty creſt. Conſider this, *diſobedience*; and bend thy iron ſinew. O! conſider this, all ye that forget, or affront, the tremendous JEHOVAH. He can, by a ſingle act of his will, lay the univerſe in utter ruin: and can he want power to bring *you*, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, to the duſt of death, or to the flames of hell? He has—I ſay not, ten thouſand lightnings to ſcorch you to aſhes; ten thouſand thunders to cruſh you into atoms; but, what is unſpeakably more dreadful—He has an *army* of terrors even in the *look* of his angry countenance. His very frown is worſe than deſtruction.

I cannot diſmiſs this ſubject, without admiring the *patience* of the bleſſed GOD. Who, though ſo ſtrong and powerful, yet "is provoked every day."—Surely, as is his Majeſty, ſo is his mercy; his pity altogether commenſurate to his power. If I vilify but the name of an earthly monarch; I loſe my liberty, and am confined to the dungeon. If I appear in arms, and draw the ſword, againſt my national ſovereign; my life is forfeited, and my very blood will ſcarce atone for the crime. But Thee I have diſhonoured, O! thou King immortal and inviſible! againſt Thee my breaſt has fomented *ſecret diſaffection*; my behaviour has riſen up in *open rebellion*; and yet I am ſpared, yet I am preſerved. Inſtead of being baniſhed from thy preſence; I ſit at thy table, and am fed from thy hand. Inſtead of purſuing me with *thunder-bolts* of vengeance, thy *favours* ſurround me on every ſide. That arm, that injured arm, which might juſtly fall, with irretrievable ruin, on a traitor's head; is moſt graciouſly ſtretched out, to careſs him, with the tendereſt endearments; to cheriſh him

with

with every inſtance of parental kindneſs.—O! thou mightieſt, thou beſt of beings, how am I pained at my very ſoul, for ſuch ſhameful and odious diſingenuity! Let me always abominate myſelf, as the baſeſt of creatures; but *adore* that unwearied long-ſuffering of thine, which refuſes to be irritated; *love* that unremitted goodneſs, which no acts of ingratitude could ſtop, or ſo much as check, in it's gracious current. O! let this ſtubborn heart; which duty could not bind; which threatenings could not awe; be the captive, the *willing captive*, of ſuch triumphant beneficence.

I have often been ſtruck with wonder at that almighty ſkill, which *weighed* the mountains in ſcales, and the hills in a balance; which *proportioned* the waters in the hollow of it's hand, and *adjuſted* the duſt of the earth* by a meaſure. But how much more marvellous is that magnificent œconomy, which *poiſed* the ſtars with inexpreſſible nicety, and *meted* out the heavens with a ſpan! Where all is prodigiouſly vaſt; immenſely various; and yet more than mathematically exact. Surely, the *wiſdom* of GOD manifeſts itſelf in the ſkies, and ſhines in thoſe lucid orbs. Shines on the contemplative mind, with a luſtre incomparably brighter, than

* *Iſa.* xl. 12. *The duſt of the earth*, in this ſublime ſcripture, ſignifies the dry land, or *ſolid* part of our globe. Which is placed in contradiſtinction to the whole collection of *fluid* matter, mentioned in the preceding clauſe.—Perhaps, this remarkable expreſſion may be intended to intimate, not only the extreme niceneſs, which ſtated the dimenſions of the world *in general*, or in the groſs; but alſo that *particular exactneſs*, with which the very ſmalleſt materials, that conſtitute it's frame, (not excepting each individual atom) were calculated and diſpoſed.—*I. d.* 'Tis a ſmall thing to ſay, No ſuch enormous redundancies, as unneceſſary ridges of mountains, were ſuffered to ſubſiſt. There was not ſo much as the leaſt grain of ſand *ſuperfluous*, or a ſingle particle of duſt *deficient*.—As the grand aim of the deſcription is, to celebrate the *conſummate wiſdom*, exemplified in the creation; and to diſplay that *perfect proportion*, with which every part tallies, coincides, and harmonizes, with the whole; I have taken leave to alter the word of our *Engliſh* tranſlation *comprehend*, and introduce in it's ſtead a term, equally faithful to the *Hebrew*, and more ſignificative of the prophet's preciſe idea.

than that which their united ſplendors tranſmit to the eye.

Behold yonder countleſs multitude of globes; conſider their amazing magnitude; regard them as the ſovereigns of ſo many ſyſtems, each accompanied with his planetary equipage. Upon this ſuppoſition, what a multiplicity of mighty ſpheres, muſt be perpetually running their rounds, in the upper regions! Yet, none miſtake their way, or *wander* from the goal; though they paſs through trackleſs and unbounded fields. None *fly off* from their orbits, into extravagant excurſions; none *preſs in* upon their centre, with too near an approach. None *interfere* with each other in their perennial paſſage; or *intercept* the kindly communications of another's influence *. But all their rotations proceed in eternal harmony; keeping ſuch time, and obſerving ſuch laws, as are moſt exquiſitely adapted to the perfection of the whole.

While I contemplate this "excellent wiſdom, which "made the heavens," and attunes all their motions; how am I abaſhed at that mixture of arrogance and folly, which has at any time, inclined me to *murmur* at thy *diſpenſations*, O LORD! What is this, but a ſort of implicit treaſon againſt thy ſupremacy; and a tacit denial of thy infinite underſtanding?—Haſt thou ſo regularly placed ſuch a wonderful diverſity of ſyſtems, through the ſpaces of the univerſe?—Didſt thou, without any probationary eſſays, without any improving retouches, ſpeak them into the moſt conſummate perfection?—Doſt thou continually ſuperintend all their circumſtances, with a ſagacity that never miſtakes the minuteſt tittle of propriety? And ſhall I be ſo unaccountably ſtupid, as to queſtion the *juſtneſs* of thy *diſcernment*, in

* The interception of light, by means of an eclipſe, happens very *rarely*. And then is of ſo *ſhort* a continuance, as not to be at all inconvenient. Nay it is attended with ſuch *circumſtances*, as render it rather uſeful, than prejudicial.

in "chooſing my inheritance, and fixing the bounds of "my habitation!"—Not a ſingle erratum, in model-ing the ſtructure; determining the diſtance*; and conducting the career of *unnumbered* worlds! And ſhall my peeviſh humour preſume to cenſure thy interpoſition, with regard to the affairs of *one* inconſiderable creature; whoſe ſtature, in ſuch a comparative view, is leſs than a ſpan; and his preſent duration, little more than a moment?

O! thou GOD, "in whoſe hand my breath is, and "whoſe are all my ways," let ſuch ſentiments as now poſſeſs my thoughts, be always lively on my heart! Theſe ſhall compoſe my mind into a *chearful* acquieſ-cence, and a *thankful* ſubmiſſion; even when afflictions gall the ſenſe, or diſappointments break my ſchemes. Then ſhall I, like the grateful patriarch†, in all the changes of my condition, and even in the depths of diſtreſs, erect an *altar* of adoring reſignation; and in-ſcribe it with the apoſtle's *motto*, TO GOD ONLY WISE. Then, ſhouldſt thou give me leave to be the carver of my own fortunes, I would humbly deſire to relinquiſh the grant, and recommit the diſpoſal of my-ſelf to thy unerring beneficence. Fully perſuaded, that *thy counſels*; though contrary to my froward inclinati-ons, or even afflictive to my fleſh; are incomparably more eligible, than the blind impulſe of my own will, however ſoothing to animal nature.

On a careleſs inſpection, you perceive no accuracy, or uniformity in the poſition of the heavenly bodies. They appear

* The ſun in particular (and let this ſerve as a ſpecimen of that moſt curious exactneſs, with which the other celeſtial bodies are conſti-tuted, and all their circumſtances regulated) the ſun is formed of ſuch a determinate magnitude, and placed at ſuch a convenient diſtance— "as not to annoy, but only refreſh us, and nouriſh the ground with "it's kindly warmth. If it was *larger*, it would ſet the earth on "fire; if *ſmaller*, it would leave it frozen. If it was *nearer* us, we "ſhould be ſcorched to death; if *farther* from us, we ſhould not be "able to live for want of heat." STACKH. *Hiſt. of the Bible.*

† See *Gen.* xii. 7, 8.

appear like an *illuſtrious chaos*; a promiſcuous heap o ſhining globes; neither ranked in order, nor movin by line.—But, what *ſeems* confuſion, *is* all regularity What carries a ſhow of negligence, is really the reſul of the moſt maſterly contrivance. You think, perhaps they rove in their æreal flight; but they rove by th niceſt rule, and without the leaſt error. Their circuits though ſeemingly devious; their mazes, though intri cate to our apprehenſions *; are marked out, not indee with golden compaſſes, but by the infinitely more exac determinations of the all-wiſe Spirit.

So, what wears the *appearance* of calamity, in th allotments appointed for the godly, has really the *na ture* of a bleſſing. It iſſues from fatherly love, and wil terminate in the richeſt good. If *Joſeph* is ſnatche from the embraces of an indulgent parent, and aban doned to ſlavery in a foreign land; it is in order to ſav the holy family, from periſhing by famine; and to pre ſerve "the ſeed, in whom all the nations of the earth "ſhould be bleſſed." If he falls into the deepeſt diſ grace, it is on purpoſe that he may riſe to the higheſ honours. Even the confinement of the priſon, by th unſearchable workings of providence, opens his way t the right hand of the throne itſelf.—Let the moſt af flicted ſervant of JESUS, wait the final upſhot of things He will *then* diſcover the apparent expediency of al thoſe tribulations; which *now*, perhaps, he can hardl admit, without reluctance; or ſuffer, without ſom ſtruggles of diſſatisfaction. Then, the guſhing tear and the heaving ſigh, will be turned into tides of grati tude, and hymns of holy wonder.

In the mean time, let no audacious railer, preſump tuouſly impeach the divine procedure; but, adorin wher

* —— Mazes intricate,
Eccentric, intervolv'd; yet regular
Then moſt, when moſt irregular they ſeem. MILT.

where we cannot comprehend, let us expect the *evolution* of the myſterious plan. Then, ſhall every eye perceive; that the ſeeming labyrinths of providence, were the moſt *direct* and *compendious* way; to effect his general purpoſes of grace, and to bring about each one's particular happineſs *.—Then, alſo, ſhall it be clearly ſhewn, in the preſence of applauding worlds; why, virtue pined in want, while vice rioted in affluence. Why, amiable innocence ſo often dragged the dungeon *chain*, while horrid guilt trailed the *robe* of ſtate.—That day of univerſal audit, that day of everlaſting retribution, will not only *vindicate*, but *magnify*, the whole management of heaven. The auguſt ſeſſions ſhall cloſe with this unanimous, this glorious acknowledgment: "Though "*clouds and darkneſs*, impenetrable by any human ſcru-"tiny, *were* ſometimes *round about* the ſupreme con-"ductor of things; yet *righteouſneſs and judgment were* "*the* conſtant *habitation of his ſeat* †; the invariable "ſtandard of all his adminiſtrations."—Thus (if I may illuſtrate the grandeſt truths, by inferior occurrences) while we view the arras on the ſide of *leaſt diſtinction*, it is void of any elegant fancy; without any nice ſtrokes of art; nothing but a confuſed jumble of incoherent threads. No ſooner is the piece beheld in it's *proper aſpect*, but the ſuſpected rudeneſs vaniſhes, and the moſt curious arrangement takes place. We are charmed with deſigns of the fineſt taſte, and figures of the moſt graceful form. All is ſhaped with ſymmetry; all is clad in beauty.

The *goodneſs* of GOD is moſt eminently diſplayed in the ſkies.—Could we take an underſtanding ſurvey, of

* —— —— The *moral world*,
Which, tho' to us it ſeems embroil'd, moves on
In higher order; fitted, and impell'd
By *Wiſdom*'s fineſt hand, and iſſuing all
In general good. THOMP. *Win.* l. 586. laſt Edit.

† Pſal. xcvii. 2.

of whatever is formed by the divine Architect, through out the whole extent of *material* things; our mind would be transported with their excellencies, and ou tongues echo back that great encomium, They ar "good, very good *." Most *beautiful* † in themselves contrived by unerring wisdom, and executed with inimi table skill. Most *useful* † in their functions; exactl fitting the places they fill, and completely answering th purposes, for which they were intended.—All the part of the inanimate creation proclaim, both by their in trinsic and relative excellencies, the all-diffusive bene ficence of their Maker.

How much more wonderful are the displays of di vine indulgence in the worlds of life! Because, dea matter is incapable of delight; therefore the gracious Creator has raised innumerable ranks of *perceptive ex istence*. Such as are qualified to taste his bounty, an enjoy each happiness suited to it's peculiar state. Wit this view, he furnished the regions of inferior nature with an order and a series of sensitive beings. Th *waters* teem with shoals of finny inhabitants. The *dr land* swarms with animals of every order. The dwel lings of the *firmament* are occupied by multitudes o winged people. Not so much as a *green leaf*, philoso phers say, but lodges and accommodates, it's puny ani malcule tenants ‡.—And wherefore this diversity, thi profusio

* Gen. i. 31.

† † This καλοκαγαθια of the universe, and all it's parts, ha been very highly, and very justly extolled, by the antient inquirer into nature. And was, indeed, an illustrious scene, spread before th sages of the heathen world; wherein to contemplate the goodnes and the glories, of the Supreme Being.—It was nobly said, by a pagan philosopher, on this occasion; Εις ερωτα μεταβληθηναι τον Θεο μελλοντα δημιουργειν. *That GOD, when he undertook the work of cre ation, transformed himself into love.*—But he need not *transform* him self into this amiable principle; for "GOD *is* love." As was much more nobly said by one, whom that *philosopher* would have termed *barbarian*. 1 *John* iv. 8.

‡ A very celebrated poet, in a beautiful paragraph on this subject informs his readers; That all nature swarms with life. In subter ranean

profuſion of living creatures; flying the air, treading the ground, and gliding through the paths of the ſea? For this moſt glorious reaſon—That the eternal Sovereign may exerciſe his ſuperabundant goodneſs; that his *table* may be furniſhed with millions and millions of *gueſts*; that he may fill, every hour, every moment, their mouths with food, or their hearts with gladneſs.

But, what a ſmall theatre are three or four *elements*, for the operations of JEHOVAH's bounty! His magnificent liberality, ſcorns ſuch ſcanty limits. If you aſk, wherefore has he created *all worlds*, and repleniſhed them with an unknown multiplicity of beings; riſing, one above another, in an endleſs gradation of ſtill richer endowments, and ſtill nobler capacities? The anſwer is—For the manifeſtation of his own glory, and eſpecially for the *communication* of his inexhauſtible beneficence*.—The great Creator could propoſe no advantage to himſelf. His bliſs is incapable of any addition.

mean *cells*, the earth heaves with vital motion. Even the hard *ſtone*, in the very inmoſt receſſes of it's impenetrable citadel, holds multitudes of animated inhabitants. The *pulp* of mellow fruit, and all the productions of the orchard, feed the inviſible nations. Each *liquid*, whether of acid taſte, or milder reliſh, abounds with various forms of ſenſitive exiſtence. Nor is the pure *ſtream*, or tranſparent *air*, without their colonies of unſeen people.—In which conſtitution of things, we have a wonderful inſtance, not only of the divine goodneſs to thoſe minute beings, in giving them a *capacity* for animal gratifications; but of his tender care for mankind, in making them *imperceptible* to our ſenſes.

—— —— Theſe, conceal'd
By the kind art of forming heav'n, eſcape
The groſſer eye of man: for, if the worlds
In worlds incloſ'd ſhould on his ſenſes burſt;
From cates ambroſial, and the nectar'd bowl,
He'd turn abhorrent; and, in dead of night,
When ſilence ſleeps o'er all, be ſtunn'd with noiſe.

THOMPSON's *Summer*.

* A ſacred writer, conſidering this delightful ſubject; and confining his obſervation, within the *narrow limits* of his own country; cries out, with a mixture of amazement and gratitude; *How great is his goodneſs, and how great is his beauty!*—Who then can forbear being loſt in wonder, and tranſported with delight; when he extends his

"Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever the "earth and the world were made," He was ſupremely happy, in his own independent and all-ſufficient Self. His grand deſign therefore, in erecting ſo many ſtately fabrics; and peopling them with ſo many tribes of inhabitants; was, to *transfuſe* his exuberant kindneſs, and *impart* felicity in all it's forms. Ten thouſand worlds, ſtocked with ten thouſand times ten thouſand ranks, of ſenſitive and intelligent exiſtence, are ſo many ſpacious gardens; which, with rivers of communicated joy, this ever-flowing fountain waters continually.

Boundleſs *, and (which raiſes our idea of this divine principle, to the very higheſt degree of perfection) diſintereſted * munificence! How *inexpreſſibly amiable* is the bleſſed GOD, conſidered in this charming light! Is it poſſible to conceive any excellence, ſo adorable and lovely; as infinite benevolence, guided by unerring wiſdom, and exerting Almighty power, on purpoſe to make a whole univerſe happy?—O my ſoul, what an *irreſiſtible attractive* is here! What a moſt worthy object, for thy moſt fervent affection! Shall now every glittering toy, become a rival to this tranſcendently beneficent being, and rob him of thy heart?—No. Let his all-creating arm teach thee, to truſt in the fulneſs of his ſufficiency:—Let his all-ſuperintending eye incline thee, to acquieſce in the diſpenſations of his providence:—And let his bounty; ſo freely vouchſafed; ſo amply diffuſed; induce thee to *love* him, with all the ardor of a grateful and admiring ſoul: induce thee to *ſerve* him, not with a joyleſs awe, or ſla-

viſh

his ſurvey, to thoſe infinitely more *copious communications* of divine Bounty; which, like ſalutary and refreſhing ſtreams, run through all worlds, and make, not only the *little valleys* of a ſingle kingdom, but the immenſity of creation *laugh and ſing*, Zech. ix. 17.

* * In this ſenſe, *There is none good, but One, that is GOD.* None univerſally and eſſentially good. None, whoſe goodneſs extends itſelf, in an infinite *variety* of bleſſings, to *every* capable object; or, who always diſpenſes his favours, from the *ſole* principle of *free* and diſintereſted benevolence.

with dread, but with unfeigned alacrity and a delightful complacency.

If the goodneſs of GOD is ſo admirably ſeen, in the works of nature, and the favours of providence; with what a noble ſuperiority, does it *even triumph*, in the *myſtery* of *redemption* *! Redemption, is the brighteſt mirror, in which to contemplate this moſt lovely attribute of the Deity. Other gifts, are only as *mites* from the divine treaſury; but redemption opens, I had almoſt ſaid exhauſts, all the *ſtores* of indulgence and grace. Herein, "GOD *commendeth* his love†:" not only manifeſts, but ſets it off, as it were, with every bright and grand embelliſhment: manifeſts it in ſo ſtupendous a manner, that it is beyond parallel; beyond thought; "above all bleſſing and praiſe."—Was HE not thy *Son*, everlaſting GOD, thy *only* Son; the Son of thy boſom from eternal ages; the higheſt object of thy complacential delight? Was not thy love to this adorable Son, incomparably greater than the tendereſt affection of *any*, or the united affections of *all*, mortal parents? Was not the bleſſed JESUS more illuſtrious in excellency, than all Angels; more exalted in dignity, than all heavens? Yet didſt thou reſign HIM, for poor mortals; for vile ſinners!—Couldſt thou ſee him deſcend,

* In this, and in other parts of the *Contemplations*, the reader will obſerve; That the attributes of the DEITY are repreſented, as ſhining, with more diſtinguiſhed luſtre, in the wonders of *redemption*, than in the works of *creation*. If *ſuch* remarks ſhould ſeem to be unprecedented, or to ſtand in need of a vindication; permit me to ſubjoin the ſentiments of a great critic, equally verſed in *both* thoſe ſublime theories:—"In a perfect orator, he ſays, *Tully* requires ſome ſkill in the "nature of heavenly bodies; becauſe, his mind will become more "extenſive and unconfined; and, when he deſcends to treat of human "affairs, he will both think and write in a more exalted and magni-"ficent manner. For the ſame reaſon, that excellent maſter would "have recommended the ſtudy of thoſe great and glorious myſteries, "which revelation has diſcovered to us; *to which the nobleſt parts of* "*this ſyſtem of the world are as much inferior, as the creature is leſs ex-*"*cellent than the Creator.*" *Spect.* Vol. VIII. No. 633.

† Rom. v. 8.

from his royal *throne*; and take up his abode, in the ſordid *ſtable?* See him forego the *homage* of the ſeraphim; and ſtand expoſed to the reproachful *indignities* of an inſolent rabble? See him arraigned at the bar, and ſentenced to death; numbered with malefactors, and nailed to the gibbet; bathed in his own innocent blood, and pouring out his ſoul in agonies of ſorrow!—Could the Father, the Father *himſelf*, with unknown philanthropy *, ſay? "It ſhall, it ſhall, be ſo! My "pity to rebellious man pleads, and prevails. Awake, "therefore, O *ſword* †, edged with divine wrath! "Awake; and be ſheathed in that *immaculate* breaſt; "pierce that *dearly beloved* heart. I am content, that "my Son endure the ſharpneſs of death, rather than "ſinful mortals periſh for ever."—Incomprehenſible love! May it henceforward, be the favourite ſubject of my *meditation*; more delightful to my muſing mind than applauſe to the ambitious ear! May it be the darling theme of my *diſcourſe*; ſweeter to my tongue, than the droppings of the honey-comb to my taſte! May it be my choiceſt *comfort*, through all the changes of life; and my reviving *cordial*, even in the laſt extremities of diſſolution itſelf!

A *Prophet* contemplating, with a diſtant ſurvey, this unexampled inſtance of Almighty love, is wrapt into a *traſport* of *devotion*. At a loſs for proper acknowledgments, he calls upon the whole univerſe to aid his labouring breaſt, and ſupply his lack of praiſe. *Sing melodiouſly, ye* vaulted *heavens*; *exult, and even leap for gladneſs, thou* cumberous *earth*; *ye mountains* break your long ſilence, and *burſt into peals of loudeſt acclamation* ‡; *for the* LORD, by this precious gift, and this great

* *Philanthropy*, that is, Loving-kindneſs to man.

† Zech. xiii. 7.

‡ *Iſa.* xlix. 13.—I have not adhered to our common tranſlation, but endeavoured to preſerve, ſomewhat more faithfully, the noble *pathos* and

great ſalvation, *hath comforted his people.*—A *ſacred hiſto-rian* hath left it upon record; that, at the firſt exhibi-tion of this raviſhing ſcene, there was with the Angel who brought the bleſſed tidings, a multitude of the heavenly hoſt; praiſing GOD, and making the concave of the ſkies reſound with their hallelujahs. At the dawn of the Sun of righteouſneſs, when he was begin-ning to riſe with healing in his wings, the *morning ſtars* ſang together, and all the *ſons* of *GOD* ſhouted for joy. —And ſhall *man*, whom this gracious diſpenſation prin-cipally reſpects; ſhall *man*, who is the centre of all theſe gladdening rays; ſhall he have no heart to adore, no anthem to celebrate, this

Love without end, and without meaſure grace? MILT.

How *pure* is the ſtate of the ſky, and how clear it's aſpect! Clearer than the limpid ſtream; purer than the tranſparent cryſtal; and more curiouſly fine, than the poliſhed mirror. That *ſtately cieling*; fretted with gold, and ſtretched to an extent of many millions of leagues; is not diſfigured with a ſingle flaw. That *azure canopy*; embroidered with ſtars, and ſpacious enough to form a covering for unnumbered worlds; is without the leaſt ſpot or wrinkle.—Yet this, even this, will ſcarce yield us, ſo much as a faint repreſen-tation of the *divine purity*. GOD, is a GOD of match-leſs and tranſcendent excellency. His ways are up-rightneſs itſelf. His counſels and words are the very ſanctity of wiſdom and of truth. The *laws*, which he has given to univerſal nature; are exquiſitely contrived,

and inimitable *energy*, of the ſacred original.—The love of GOD, manifeſted in a divine and dying Saviour, is a bleſſing of ſuch incon-ceivable richneſs; as muſt render all acknowledgments *flat*, and all encomiums *languid*. Yet, I think, the moſt poetical and moſt em-phatical celebration of that unſpeakable inſtance of goodneſs, is con-tained in this rapturous exclamation of the prophet. Which inti-mates, with a wonderful majeſty of ſentiment, that even the whole compaſs of the *inanimate creation*; could it be ſenſible of the benefit, and capable of delight; would expreſs it's *gratitude*, in all theſe de-monſtrations of the moſt lively and exuberant joy.

and beyond all poſſibility of improvement. The *precepts*, which he has appointed for the human race; are a complete ſummary, of all that is honourable in itſelf and perfective of the rational mind.—Not the leaſt *overſight*, in planning a ſeries of events for all futurity. Not the leaſt mal-adminiſtration, in managing the affairs of every age, ſince time began; and of every nation, under the whole heavens.—Pardon theſe diſparaging expreſſions. A *negative* perfection is far, far beneath thy dignity, *O thou moſt Higheſt**. In all theſe inſtances; in all thy acts, and all thy attributes; thou art not only holy, but "*glorious* in *holineſs*."

So inconceivably holy is the LORD GOD of hoſts, that he ſees *defilement* even in the *brightneſs* of the firmament. The living ſapphire of the heavens, before his majeſty, loſes it's luſtre. *Yea, the ſtars* (though the moſt pure and reſplendent part of the heavens) *are not pure in his ſight. How much leſs man, who* in his fallen

* *O Thou moſt Higheſt.*—This expreſſion occurs more than once, in the Pſalms uſed by the eſtabliſhed church. It is, I think, one of thoſe *beauties*; which, becauſe often exhibited, generally eſcape our notice. It is a *ſuperlative* formed on a ſuperlative; and, though not ſtrictly conformable to grammatical rules, is nobly ſuperior to them all.—The language ſeems to be ſenſible of it's own deficiency; when the incomprehenſible JEHOVAH is addreſſed, or celebrated. Oppreſſed, as it were, with the glories of the ſubject, it labours after a *more emphatical* manner of diction, than the ordinary forms of ſpeech afford.—It is, if I rightly judge, one of thoſe daring and happy peculiarities of a maſterly genius, which Mr. POPE ſo finely deſcribes; and, while he deſcribes, exemplifies:

> Great wits ſometimes may *gloriouſly offend*,
> And *riſe* to *faults* true critics dare not mend;
> From vulgar bounds with brave diſorder part,
> And ſnatch a grace beyond the reach of art.
>
> *Eſſay on Criticiſm.*

St. *Paul's*—ελαχιστοτερος παντων των αγιων—is a beautiful paſſage of the like nature. Which our tranſlators have very properly rendered *Leſs than the leaſt of all ſaints.*—His πολλω μαλλον χειρισσον is another inſtance of the ſame kind. But here the *Engliſh* verſion fails. *Far better* is extremely *flaccid*, compared with the *nervous* original. And I greatly queſtion, whether it is poſſible to tranſlate the ſentence with equal conciſeneſs, and with equal ſpirit. See *Eph.* iii. 8. *Phil.*

fallen and depraved ſtate, *is* but as *a worm*, that crawls in the corrupted carcaſe; *and the ſon of man*, *who*, by reaſon of his manifold actual impurities, *is* too juſtly compared to *an inſect*, that wallows amidſt ſtench and putrefaction * ?—Is there not then abundant cauſe, for the moſt irreproachable and eminent of mankind, to renounce all arrogant pretenſions; to lay aſide every aſſuming air; to take nothing but *ſhame* and confuſion to themſelves? A holy Prophet, and a holy Prince, felt ſuch humbling impreſſions, from a glimpſe of the uncreated purity. *I abhor myſelf in duſt and aſhes* †, was the declaration of the one: *I am a man of unclean lips* ‡, the confeſſion of the other.—Should not this teach us all, to adore the divine mercies, for that precious *purifying fountain* §, which was foretold from the foundation of the world; but was opened at that

* *Job* xxv. 5, 6. I ſubmit it to the judgment of the learned, whether this is not the true meaning of the text.—It may not, perhaps, recommend itſelf to the *ſqueamiſhly nice* critic; or to thoſe perſons who dream of, I know not what, *dignity* in our fallen nature. But it ſeems, in preference to every other interpretation, *ſuitable* to the ſacred context; and is far, far from being *injurious* to the character of that apoſtate race, which is "altogether become abo-"minable," and "is as an unclean thing."—On this ſuppoſition, there is not only an apparent, but a very ſtriking contraſt, between the purity of GOD, and the pollution of man. The *purity* of the moſt high GOD, which outſhines the moon, and eclipſes the ſtars; the *pollution* of degenerate man, which, excluſive of a Saviour, would render him as loathſome to the all-ſeeing Eye, as the vileſt vermin are in ours.—Without aſſigning this ſenſe to the paſſage, I cannot diſcern the force of the *antitheſis*, nor indeed the *propriety* of the ſentiment. Worms, in the general, give us an idea of *meanneſs* and *infirmity*; not of *defilement* and *impurity*. Unleſs they are inſects, hatched amidſt putrefaction, and conſidered in ſuch noiſome circumſtances.—The two words of the original, *rame* and *tuloe*, are evidently uſed in this ſignification, by *Moſes* and *Iſaiah*. By the former, to denote the vermin, which devoured the *putrefied* manna; by the latter, to expreſs the reptiles, which ſwarm in the body that ſees *corruption*, *Exod.* xvi. 20. *Iſa.* xiv. 11.

† Job xlii. 6. ‡ Iſa. vi. 5.

§ *In that day there ſhall be a fountain, opened to the houſe of* David, *and to the inhabitants of* Jeruſalem, *for ſin and uncleanneſs*, Zech. xiii. 1.

that awful juncture, when knotty whips tore the flesh; when ragged thorns mangled the temples; when sharpened nails cut fresh sluices for the crimson current; when the gash of the spear completed the dreadful work, and *forthwith flowed there*, from the wounded heart, *blood and water?*

Especially, since GOD himself saw no blemish in his *dear Son. He looketh to the moon, and it shineth not:* yet his all-penetrating and jealous eye, discerned nothing amiss, nothing defective, in our glorious Redeemer. Nothing amiss? He bore this most illustrious testimony, concerning his holy child JESUS: "In him I am "*pleased*; I am *well pleased*; I acquiesce, with intire "complacency, and with the highest delight, in his "person; his undertaking; and the whole execution "of his office."—How should this thought, enliven our hopes; while the other, mortifies our pride? Should not our hearts spring within us, and even leap for joy; at the repeated assurance given us by revelation, that such a divinely excellent person is our mediator? What apparent reason has every believer, to adopt the blessed Virgin's exclamation! "*My soul doth magnify the* "*LORD* for his transcendent mercy; *and my spirit* "*rejoices*, not in wide extended harvests, waving over "my fertile glebe*; not in armies vanquished, and "leaving the peculiar treasure of nations for my spoil*; "but in an infinitely richer, nobler blessing, even *in* "*GOD my Saviour.*"—That a person so sublime and perfect, has vouchsafed to become my *surety*: to give himself for my *ransom*, in the world below; and act as my *advocate*, in the royal presence above: yea, to make *my* recovery, the reward of his sufferings; *my* final felicity, the honour of his mediatorial kingdom!

When

* * The inspired penman, from these two occasions of distinguished joy, sets forth the incomparably *greater delight*, which arises from the gift of a Saviour, and the blessing of redemption. *Isa.* ix. *ver.* 3. compared with *ver.* 6.

When an innumerable multitude* of bodies, many of them more than a *hundred thouſand miles* in diameter†, are all ſet in motion:—when the orbits, in which they perform their periodical revolutions, are extended at the rate of ſeveral hundreds of *millions*:—when each has a *diſtinct* and ſeparate ſphere, for finiſhing his vaſt circuit:—when no one knows, what it is to be cramped; but each moſt *freely expatiates*, in his unbounded career:—when every one is placed, at ſuch an *immenſe remove* from each other; that they appear to their reſpective inhabitants, only as ſo many ſpots of light:—How aſtoniſhing muſt be the expanſe, which yields *room* for all thoſe mighty globes, and their widely diffuſed operations! To what prodigious lengths, did the Almighty builder ſtretch his line, when he marked out the ſtupendous platform!—I wonder at ſuch an immeaſurable extent. My very thoughts are loſt, in this abyſs of ſpace. But, be it known to mortals; be it never forgot by ſinners; that, in all it's moſt ſurprizing amplitude, it is *ſmall*, it is *ſcanty*, compared with the bounty and the mercy of it's Maker.

His *bounty*, is abſolutely without limits‡, and without end. The moſt laviſh generoſity cannot exhauſt, or

* This refers, not only to the planets which paſs and repaſs about our ſun, but alſo to the other planetary worlds, which are ſuppoſed to attend the ſeveral fixed ſtars.

† The diameter of *Jupiter* is calculated at 130,650 miles, while his orbit is reckoned to conſiſt of 895,134,000. Which computation, according to the maxims of aſtronomy, and the laws of proportion, may, as is taken for granted in the Contemplations, be applied to *other planets* revolving round *other ſuns*.

‡ By *bounty*, I mean, not the actual exerciſe, or the ſenſible effects, of this excellency in the Deity. Theſe *are*, and always *muſt be*, through the immenſe perfection of the attribute, and the neceſſary ſcantineſs of the recipient, bounded. But, I would be underſtood, as ſpeaking of the divine *Power*, and the divine *Will*, to exert divine Beneficence. Theſe can have no real, no imaginable limits. Theſe, after a profuſion of bleſſings, diſtributed to unnumbered worlds, continued through unnumbered ages, muſt *ſtill* have more to beſtow; for *ever* have more to beſtow; *infinitely* more to beſtow, than it is poſſible for creation itſelf to receive.

or even diminiſh, his munificence. O! all ye tribes of men; or rather, all ye claſſes of intelligent creatures; ye are not ſtreightened in the *liberality* of your ever-bleſſed Creator; be not ſtreightened in your own *expectations*. "Open your mouth wide, and he ſhall "fill it," with copious and continual draughts from the cup of joy. Your GOD, on whom is your whole dependence, is more than able; is more than willing; to "ſupply all your need, according to his riches in "glory."—When the LORD JEHOVAH is the giver, and his grace* the gift; let your wiſhes be unbounded, and your cravings inſatiable. All that created beings can poſſibly *covet*, is but a very ſmall pittance of that unknown happineſs, which the everlaſting Benefactor is ready to *beſtow*. Suppoſe every charitable diſpoſition, which warms the hearts of the human race, added to thoſe more inlarged affections, which glow in heavenly boſoms; what were they all, even in their higheſt exerciſe, compared with the benignity of the divine nature?—Bleſs *me* then, thou eternal Source of love; bleſs *all* that reverence thy holy name; according to thy own moſt profuſe goodneſs. Whoſe great prerogative it is, to diſdain all meaſure. O! bleſs us, in proportion to that grace; the richneſs of which (unutterable by the tongues of men, and of angels) was once *ſpoken* in the groans, and *written* in the wounds, of thy expiring Son!

Spacious indeed are theſe heavens! Where do they begin? Where do they end? What is their extent? Can angels anſwer my queſtions? Have angels travelled the vaſt circuit? Can angels meaſure the

* 2 *Cor.* ix. 8. *GOD is able to make* all *grace* abound *towards you, that ye, having* all ſufficiency *in* all things, *may* abound *to* every *good work*.—How beautiful, and emphatical, is this deſcription! Inferior to nothing, but that extent of ability, and thoſe riches of liberality, which it ſo eloquently celebrates. Does it not *exhauſt* all the powers of language; while it attempts to give us a *ſpecimen*, of the munificence of the LORD?

the bounds of ſpace? No; 'tis boundleſs, 'tis unknown, 'tis amazing all.—How charming then to reflect, that the *mercy* of GOD is "greater than the heavens;" is more extenſive than the dimenſions of the ſky. Tranſporting reflection! Let me indulge thee once more *. Let me think over the delightful diſplays of this lovely attribute; and, while I admire the *trophies* of forgiving goodneſs, add one to the number. —With what amiable and affecting colours, is this repreſented in the *parable* of the *prodigal!* What could induce that fooliſh youth, to forſake his father's houſe? Had he not been tenderly cheriſhed by the good parent; and loaded with benefits, from his indulgent hand? Were not the reſtraints, of parental government, an eaſy yoke? or rather, a *preſervative* from *ruin*? Notwithſtanding every endearing obligation, he revolts from his duty; and launches into ſuch ſcandalous irregularities, as were diſhonourable to his family, and deſtructive to himſelf.—When neceſſity, not choice, but ſharp neceſſity drove him to a ſubmiſſive return; does the injured father ſtand aloof, or ſhut his door? Quite the reverſe. He eſpies him, while he is yet a *great way off*; and, the moment he beholds the profligate youth, he *has compaſſion on him*. His bowels yearn; they "ſound like an harp," touched with notes divinely ſoft. He never once thinks of his ungracious departure, and infamous debaucheries. Pity, parental pity, paſſes an act of oblivion; and, in one inſtant, cancels

* *Once more*, refers to page 73, of *Reflections on a Flower Garden*. —The following pages, to the 304, exhibit a *digreſſive* view of the divine Mercy. I thought it proper to appriſe my reader of this excurſion; though, I hope, it will be needleſs to offer an apology, for enlarging upon a theme incomparably joyous. Who can complain of *tediouſneſs*, while I ſpeak conſolation to diſtreſſed, and recovery to ruined creatures? The divine Mercy is the ſole fountain of all our preſent and future bleſſings. In conformity to this benign attribute, human hopes ariſe, and human felicity flows. Who, therefore, can be weary of *viewing* and *reviewing*; when the lengths and breadths of forgiving grace, are the raviſhing proſpect?

cancels a ſeries of long-continued provocations.—So ſtrong are the workings of fatherly affection; that he is almoſt impatient to embrace the naked and deſtitute wretch. The ſon's pace is ſlow, *he aroſe and came*; the father's is ſwift, he ſprung forth (aged as he was) and *ran*. And is there a ſingle frown in his brow, or one upbraiding word on his tongue?—Inſtead of loathing the ſordid creature, or reproaching him for his odious exceſſes; he *falls* on his *neck*, claſps him in his arms, and hugs him to his boſom. Inſtead of diſowning the riotous ſpendthrift, or rejecting him for his undutiful behaviour; he receives and welcomes him with *kiſſes* of delight. He rejoices, at his return from extravagance and vice; as he formerly rejoiced, on the day of his nativity.—When this companion of harlots opens his mouth, *before he ſpeaks, the father hears*. He interrupts him, in the midſt of his intended ſpeech. The overflowings of his compaſſionate heart can brook no delay. He ſeems to be *uneaſy* himſelf, till he has made the afflicted penitent *glad*, with the aſſurance of his acceptance, and the choiceſt of his favours.—While the poor abaſhed offender ſeeks nothing more, than not to be abhorred; he is thoroughly reconciled, and honoured before the whole family. While he requeſts no other indulgence, than only to be treated as the *meaneſt ſervant*; he is cloathed with the *beſt robe*; he is feaſted with the *fatted calf*; he is careſſed as the deareſt of children.—Was there ever ſo bright and winning a picture, of the tendereſt mercy; moſt freely vouchſafed, even to the moſt unworthy of creatures? Yet *thus*, my ſoul; and *thus*, my fellow-ſinner; will the LORD GOD of everlaſting compaſſions receive us; if, ſenſible of our miſery, and thirſting for ſalvation, we turn to him through JESUS CHRIST.

Where ſin has abounded, ſays the proclamation from the court of heaven, *grace doth much more abound*.—*Manaſſeh* was a monſter of barbarity; for he cauſed

hi

his own children to pass through the fire, and filled *Jerusalem* with innocent blood. *Manasseh* was an adept in iniquity; for he not only multiplied, and to an extravagant degree, his own sacrilegious impieties; but he poisoned the principles, and perverted the manners of his subjects, *making them to do worse than the* most detestable of the *heathen* idolaters *. Yet, through this super-abundant grace, he is humbled; he is reformed; and becomes a child of forgiving love, an heir of immortal glory.—Behold that bitter and bloody persecutor *Saul*; when, breathing out threatenings †, and bent upon slaughter, he worried the lambs, and put to death the disciples of JESUS. Who, upon the principles of human judgment, would not have pronounced *him* a vessel of wrath, destined to unavoidable damnation? Nay, would not have been ready to conclude; that, if there were heavier chains, and a deeper dungeon, in the world of woe; they must surely be reserved, for such an implacable enemy of true godliness? Yet, (admire, and adore, the inexhaustible treasures of grace!) this *Saul*, is admitted into the goodly fellowship of the pro-

 phets;

* See 2 *Chron.* xxxiii.

† *Acts* ix. 1. Σαυλος ἐτι εμπνεων απειλης και φονυ, *Saul yet breathing out threatening and slaughter.* What a representation is here of a mind, *mad* with *rage*, and abandoned to the fiercest extremes of barbarity! I scarce know, whether I am more *shocked* at the persecutor's savage disposition, or *charmed* with the evangelist's lively description.—The adverb ἐτι seems referable to chap. viii. ver. 3. and has, in this connexion, a peculiar force. The havock he had committed, the inoffensive families he had *already* ruined, were not sufficient to assuage his vengeful spirit. They were only a *taste*; which, instead of glutting the blood-hound, made him more closely pursue the track, and more eagerly pant for destruction. He *is still* athirst for violence and murder. So eager and insatiable is his thirst, that he even *breathes out* threatening and slaughter. His words are spears and arrows, and his tongue a sharp sword. 'Tis as natural for him to *menace* the christians, as to breathe the air.—Nay, they *bleed* every hour, every moment, in the purposes of his rancorous heart. It is only owing to want of power, that every syllable he utters, every breath he draws, does not deal about deaths, and cause some of the innocent disciples to fall.

phets; is numbered with the noble army of martyrs; and makes a diſtinguiſhed figure, among the glorious company of the Apoſtles.—The *Corinthians*, were flagitious even to a proverb. Some of them wallowed in ſuch abominable vices, and habituated themſelves to ſuch outrageous acts of injuſtice, as were a reproach to human nature. Yet, even theſe ſons of violence, and ſlaves of ſenſuality, "were waſhed; were ſanctified; "were juſtified *." *Waſhed*, in the precious blood of a dying Redeemer; *ſanctified*, by the powerful operation of the bleſſed Spirit; *juſtified*, through the infinitely tender mercies of a gracious GOD. Thoſe, who were once the burden of the earth, are now the joy of heaven, and the delight of angels.

There is another inſtance in ſcripture, which moſt loudly publiſhes that ſweeteſt of the divine names, *The LORD, the LORD GOD, merciful and gracious, long ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs and truth; keeping mercy for thouſands, forgiving iniquity, tranſgreſſion, and ſin* †. An inſtance this, which exceeds all the former; which exceeds whatever can be imagined; which if it was to forget, the very ſtones might cry out, and found it in my ears. I mean the caſe of thoſe ſinners, who murdered the *Prince* of *peace*, and LORD of glory.—Theſe men, could ſcarce have the ſhadow of an excuſe for their crime; hardly a circumſtance, to extenuate their guilt. They were well acquainted with his exemplary converſation; they had often heard his heavenly doctrines; they were almoſt daily ſpectators of his unequalled miracles. They therefore had all poſſible reaſon to *honour* him, as the moſt illuſtrious of beings; and to *receive* his goſpel, as the moſt ineſtimable of bleſſings. Yet, notwithſtanding all theſe engaging motives to love him, even above their own lives; they ſeize his perſon; aſperſe his character; drag him be-

for

* 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11. † Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.

fore a heathen tribunal; and extort a ſentence of death, againſt innocence and holineſs itſelf. Never was the *vileſt ſlave*, ſo contumeliouſly abuſed; nor the moſt *execrable malefactor*, ſo barbarouſly executed. The ſun was confounded at the ſhocking ſcene; and one cannot but wonder, how the avenging lightnings could with-hold their flaſhes. The earth trembled at the horrid deed; and why, why did it not cleave aſunder, and open a paſſage, for ſuch blood-thirſty miſcreants, into the nethermoſt hell? Shall *theſe* ever hope to obtain forgiveneſs, from the righteous Judge? Shall not *theſe* be conſigned over to inexorable wrath, and the ſevereſt torments? O the miraculous effects of divine grace! O the triumphant Goodneſs of GOD our Saviour! Many, even of *theſe* impious wretches, at the deſcent of the Holy Ghoſt, were convinced of their miſerable ſtate; were wounded with penitential remorſe; fled to the ſanctuary of the croſs; had their pardon ratified by the baptiſmal ſeal; and, continuing in the apoſtles doctrine, were made partakers of the kingdom of heaven. Where they now ſhine, as ſo many everlaſting *monuments* of moſt diſtinguiſhed *mercy*; and receive beatitude paſt utterance, from that very Redeemer, whom once "with wicked hands they crucified and "ſlew."

Well might the prophet cry out, with a pleaſing amazement; "who is a GOD like unto thee, that par-"doneth iniquity, and paſſeth by tranſgreſſion*!"—Let all fleſh know aſſuredly; let all fleſh rejoice greatly; that with the LORD there is *ſuch mercy*, and with his CHRIST *ſuch plentiful redemption*.—And O! for the voice of an arch-angel, to circulate the glad-tidings through the univerſe. That the *American* ſavage, as well as the *European* ſage, may learn the *exceeding riches of grace* in CHRIST. Through whoſe infinitely ſatisfy-

* Mic. vii. 18.

ing propitiation, all manner of ſin, barbarity, and blaſphemy, are freely forgiven unto men.

What a grand, and majeſtic *dome*, is the ſky! Where are the *pillars*, which ſupport the ſtately concave? What art, moſt exactly true, balances the preſſure? What props, of inſuperable ſtrength, ſuſtain the weight? How is that immeaſurable arch *upheld*, unſhaken and unimpaired; while ſo many generations of buſy mortals, have *ſunk* and diſappeared, as bubbles upon the ſtream?—If thoſe ſtars are of ſuch an amazing bulk; how are they alſo *faſtened*, in their lofty ſituation? By what miracle in mechanics, are ſo many thouſands of ponderous orbs, kept from falling upon our heads; kept from daſhing, both the world to pieces, and it's inhabitants to death? Are they hung in golden, or adamantine, chains? Reſt they their enormous load, on rocks of marble, or columns of braſs?—No; they are *pendulous* in fluid æther. Yet, are more immoveably *fixed*, than if the everlaſting mountains lent their foreſts, for an axle-tree; or their ridges, for a baſis. The Almighty Architect *ſtretches out the north*, and it's whole ſtarry train, *over the empty place*. He *hangs the earth*, and all the ethereal globes, *upon nothing* *. Yet are their foundations laid ſo ſure, that they can "never be moved at any time."

No unfit repreſentation, to the *ſincere* chriſtian, of his *final* perſeverance †: ſuch as points out the cauſe which

* Job xxvi. 7.

† With regard to the *final perſeverance* of the true believer; I am ſenſible, this point is not a little controverted.—The ſentiments, which follow, are *my* ſtedfaſt belief. It is by no means proper, in a work of this nature, to enter upon a diſcuſſion of the ſubject. Neither have I room, ſo much as to hint, what might be urged for it's ſupport.—Let my reader obſerve, that I am far from delivering it, as eſſential to chriſtianity, or neceſſary to ſalvation. Millions, of the very contrary conviction, are, I doubt not, high in the favour of GOD; and in a growing meetneſs, for his heavenly kingdom. As I blame none for *rejecting*, none, I hope, will be offended with

which effects it; and conſtitutes the pledge, which aſcertains it.—His nature is all enfeebled. He is not able, of himſelf, to think a good thought. He has no *viſible* ſafeguard, nor any ſufficiency of his *own*. And yet, whole legions of formidable enemies, are in a confederacy to compaſs his ruin. The *world*, lays unnumbered ſnares for his feet: the *Devil*, is inceſſantly urging the ſiege, by a multitude of fiery darts,

with me for *eſtouſing*, this particular doctrine.—To be of different opinions, at leaſt in ſome inferior inſtances, ſeems an unavoidable conſequence of our preſent ſtate: where *ignorance*, in part, cleaves to the wiſeſt minds; and *prejudice* eaſily beſets the moſt impartial judgments. This may turn to our common advantage; and afford room for the diſplay and exerciſe of thoſe *healing* virtues, moderation, meekneſs, and forbearance.—Let me only be permitted to aſk, whether this tenet does not evidently tend to eſtabliſh the *comfort* of the chriſtian, and to magnify the *fidelity* of GOD our Saviour? Whether, far from countenancing ſloth, or encouraging remiſſneſs, to *know* that our labour ſhall not be in vain, is not the moſt prevailing inducement to *abound* in the work of the LORD? 1 *Cor.* xv. 58.

Is any one inclined to examine the reaſons, which made the author a proſelyte to this perſuaſion? He may find them diſplayed in the Memorial, delivered by ſeveral ſelect and eminent Divines of the Church of *England*, at the renowned Synod of *Dordt*.—(See *Acta Synod Dordrech.* part II. page 246. of the *Latin* edition, publiſhed in a ſingle quarto volume.)—Thoſe, who have no opportunity of conſulting the memoirs of that venerable aſſembly; I would refer to the works of the indefatigable and very learned *Turretin*, or to thoſe of the candid and elegant *Witſius*.—Turret. tom. II. Q. xvi. Witſ. Oecon. lib. III. cap. xiii.

The lateſt and fulleſt view of the point, which I ever remember to have met with, in any of our *Engliſh* writers, is in the *Lime-ſtreet Lectures*. Which are a defence of ſeveral moſt important doctrines of the Goſpel, and contained in two octavo volumes; the united labours of *nine* modern divines; moſt of whom, *are* well known to the world, by their *other* evangelical and uſeful writings. In thoſe lectures, the final perſeverance of the ſaints, is very particularly ſtated; and, to *my* apprehenſion at leaſt, moſt ſatisfactorily proved. The arguments, uſually urged againſt it, are impartially conſidered; and I cannot but think (with all due deference to the judgment of others) unanſwerably confuted.

And here (not to ſwell this note any farther) I ſhall only juſt hint, that the judicious *Hooker* (an authority, perhaps, as weighty and unexceptionable as any that can well be produced) gives a *ſolemn atteſtation* to this tenet, in a ſhort diſcourſe on the perpetuity of faith, ſubjoined to his *Eccleſiaſtical Polity*. Fol. Edit.

or wily temptations! the *fleſh*, like a perfidious inmate, under colour of friendſhip, and a ſpecious pretence of pleaſure, is always forward to betray his integrity.—But, amidſt all theſe threatening circumſtances, of perſonal weakneſs, and imminent danger, an inviſible aid is his defence. "*I will uphold thee*, ſays the bleſſed GOD, "*with the right hand of my righteouſneſs* *." Comfortable truth! The arm, which fixes the ſtars in their orders, and guides the planets in their courſe, is ſtretched out to preſerve the heirs of ſalvation.—"*My ſheep*, "adds the great Redeemer, *are mine*; *and they ſhall ne-* "*ver periſh*; *neither ſhall any pluck them out of my hand* †." What words are theſe! And did they come from HIM, who hath all power in heaven, and on earth? And were they ſpoke to the weakeſt of the flock; to every unfeigned follower of the great Shepherd? Then, omnipotence itſelf muſt be *vanquiſhed*; before they can be *deſtroyed*, either by the ſeductions of fraud, or the aſſaults of violence.

If you aſk therefore, what ſecurity we have, of enduring to the end, and continuing faithful unto death?—The very *ſame* that eſtabliſhes the heavens, and ſettles the ordinances of the univerſe. Can theſe be thrown into confuſion ‡? Then, may the true believer draw back unto perdition. Can the ſun be diſlodged from his ſphere, and ruſh lawleſly through the ſky? Then, and then only, can the faith of GOD's elect § be *finally* overthrown.—Be of good courage then, my ſoul; rely on thoſe divine ſuccours, which are ſo ſolemnly ſtipulated, ſo faithfully promiſed. Though thy grace be languid, as the glimmering ſpark; though the overflowings of corruption, threaten it with total extinction; yet, ſince the great JEHOVAH has undertaken to cheriſh the dim principle, "many waters cannot quench it, nor

* Iſa. xli. 10. † John x. 28. ‡ Jer. xxxi. 35, 36.
§ Tit. i. 2.

"nor all floods drown it." Nay, though it were feeble as the *ſmoking flax**, goodneſs and faithfulneſs ſtand engaged, to augment the heat; to raiſe the fire, and feed the flame; till it beam forth, a lamp of immortal glory, in the heavens.

As to the *faithfulneſs* of a covenanting God, this may be emblematically ſeen, in the ſtability of the heavenly bodies, and the perpetuity of their motions †.—Thoſe that are *fixed* or *ſtationary*, continue unalterable in their grand elevations. No injurious ſhocks; no violence of conflicting elements; are able to diſplace thoſe everlaſting hinges, on which dependent worlds revolve. Through the whole flight of time, they recede not, ſo much as a hair's breadth, from the preciſe central point of their reſpective ſyſtems.—While the *erratic*, or *planetary*, perform their prodigious ſtages, without any intermiſſion, or the leaſt embarraſſment. How ſoon, and how eaſily, is the moſt finiſhed piece of human machinery diſconcerted! But all the celeſtial movements, are ſo nicely adjuſted; all their operations, ſo critically

* The *tenderneſs* and *faithfulneſs* of God to his people, are finely pictured by the Prophet *Iſaiah*, chap. xlii. 3. Which paſſage, becauſe of it's rich conſolation, and uncommon beauty, is deſervedly adopted by St. *Matthew*, and ingrafted into the ſyſtem of evangelical truths.—*He will not* himſelf *break*, nor ſuffer to be broken by any other, *the bruiſed reed, nor quench the ſmoking flax*. Was it poſſible, to have choſen two more delicate, and expreſſive repreſentations?—Could any image, be more ſignificant of a very infirm, and enfeebled *faith*; than the flexile *reed*, that bends before every wind? Which, beſides it's natural weakneſs, is made abundantly weaker, by being *bruiſed*: and ſo, is ready to fall in pieces of itſelf.—Or could any thing, with a more pathetical exactneſs, deſcribe the extreme imbecility, of that other principle of the divine life, *love*? The ſtate of the *flax*, juſt beginning to burn, is liable to be put out by the leaſt blaſt: more liable ſtill, is the wick of the lamp, when it is not ſo much as kindled into a glimmering flame, but only *breathing ſmoke*, and uncertain whether it ſhall take fire or no.—Yet true faith, and heavenly love, though ſubſiſting amidſt ſuch pitiable infirmities, will not be abandoned by their great Author; ſhall not be extinguiſhed by any temptations; but be maintained, invigorated, and made finally triumphant. *Matt.* xii. 20.

† Pſal. cxix. 89, 90.

critically proportioned; and their mutual dependencies, ſo ſtrongly connected; that they prolong their beneficial courſes, throughout all ages.—While *mighty cities* are overwhelmed with ruin, and their very names loſt in oblivion: while *vaſt empires* are ſwept from their foundations, and leave not ſo much as a ſhadowy trace of their antient magnificence: while *all terreſtrial* things are ſubject to viciſſitude, and fluctuating in uncertainty: *theſe* are permanent in their duration. *Theſe* are invariable in their functions. "Not one faileth."—Who doubts the conſtant ſucceſſion, of day and night; or the regular returns, of ſummer and winter? And why, O! why ſhould we doubt the *veracity* of GOD, or diſtruſt the *accompliſhment* of his holy word? Can the ordinances of heaven depart? Then only can GOD forget to be gracious; or neglect the performance of his promiſe.—Nay, our LORD gives us yet firmer ground of affiance. He affords us a ſurer bottom for our faith, than the *fundamental laws* of the univerſe. *Heaven and earth*, he ſays, *ſhall paſs away*; *but my words ſhall not*, in a ſingle inſtance, or in one tittle of their import, *paſs away*. No: his ſacred word, whatever may obſtruct it; whoever may oppoſe it; ſhall be fulfilled to the very uttermoſt.

O powerful word! How aſtoniſhing is it's efficacy! When this word was iſſued forth, a thouſand worlds emerged out of nothing. Should the mighty orders be repeated, a thouſand more would ſpring into exiſtence. By this word, the vaſt ſyſtem of created things is *upheld*, in conſtant and immutable perfection. Should it give command, or ceaſe to exert it's energy; the univerſal frame would be diſſolved, and all nature revert to her original chaos. And this very word is *pledged* for the ſafety, the comfort, the happineſs of the godly. This inviolable, this Almighty word, *ſpeaks* in all the promiſes of the goſpel.—How ſtrangely infatuated are our ſouls, that we ſhould value it ſo little! What infi-

dels

dels are we in fact, that we ſhould depend upon it no more! Did it *create*, whatever has a being; and ſhall it not *work* faith in our breaſts? Do unnumbered worlds, owe their ſupport to this word; and ſhall it not be ſufficient, to buoy up our ſouls in troubles, or eſtabliſh them in trials? Is it the *life* of the univerſe, and ſhall it be a *dead* letter to mankind?

If I wiſh to be heard, when I implore heavenly bleſſings; is not *this privilege* moſt clearly made over to my enjoyment, in that well-known text, "Aſk, and it ſhall "be given you*?"—If I long for the eternal Comforter, to dwell in my heart, and ſanctify my nature; have I not an apparent title to this *high prerogative*, conferred in that ſweet aſſertive interrogation; "How "much more ſhall your heavenly Father, give the Ho"ly Spirit to them that aſk him†?"—If I earneſtly covet the ineſtimable treaſures, that are compriſed in the great IMMANUEL'S mediation; can I have a firmer claim to the *noble portion*, than is granted in that moſt precious ſcripture; "Him that cometh to me, I will "in no-wiſe caſt out‡?"—What aſſurance, of being intereſted in theſe unſpeakable mercies, would I deſire? What *form* of *conveyance*; what *deed* of *ſettlement*; were it left to my own option, ſhould I chooſe? Here is the word of a King; the King immortal and inviſible; all whoſe declarations § are truth itſelf.—If a monarch beſtow immunities on a body of men, and confirm them by an authentic charter; no one controverts, no one queſtions, their right to the royal favours. And why ſhould we ſuſpect the *validity* of thoſe glorious grants, which are made by the everlaſting Sovereign of nature; which he has alſo *ratified* by an oath, and *ſealed* with the blood of his Son?—Corporations

* Matt. vii. 7. † Luke xi. 13. ‡ John vi. 37.

§ ——— If *theſe* fail,
The pillar'd firmament is rottenneſs,
And earth's baſe built on ſtubble. MILT. *Comus.*

tions may be disfranchiſed, and charters revoked.—Even mountains may be removed, and ſtars drop from their ſpheres. But a tenure, founded on the divine promiſe, is unalienably *ſecure*; is *laſting*, as eternity itſelf.

We have endeavoured to ſpell a *ſyllable* of the eternal name, in the ancient manuſcript of the ſky. We have catched a *glimpſe* of the Almighty's glory, from the luſtre of innumerable ſtars. But would we behold all his excellencies, pourtrayed in *full* perfection; and drawn to the very life; let us attentively conſider the REDEEMER.—I obſerve, there are ſome parts of the firmament, in which the ſtars ſeem, as it were, to *cluſter*.—They are ſown thicker, they lie cloſer, than uſual; and ſtrike the eye, with redoubled ſplendor. Like the jewels on a crown, they mingle their beams; and reflect an increaſe of brilliancy, on each other.—Is there not ſuch an aſſemblage, ſuch a *conſtellation* of the divine honours, moſt amiably effulgent in the bleſſed JESUS?

Does not infinite *wiſdom** ſhine, with ſurpaſſing brightneſs, in CHRIST? To the making of a world, there was no obſtacle; but to the ſaving of man, there ſeemed to be unſurmountable bars. If the rebel is ſuffered to eſcape; where is the *inflexible juſtice*, which denounces "death as the wages of ſin?" If the offender is thoroughly pardoned; where is the *inviolable veracity*, which has ſolemnly declared, "the ſoul that "ſinneth, ſhall die?" Theſe awful attributes are ſet in terrible array; and, like an impenetrable battalion, oppoſe the ſalvation of apoſtate mankind. Who can ſuggeſt a method to *abſolve* the traiterous race; yet vindicate the honours of Almighty Sovereignty? This is an intricacy, which, the moſt exalted of finite intelligences, are unable to clear.—But, behold the *unſearchable* ſecret

* See the next note.

ſecret revealed! revealed in the wonderful redemption, accompliſhed by a dying Saviour! So plainly revealed, that "he who runs may read;" and even *babes* underſtand, what minds of the deepeſt penetration could not contrive.—The Son of GOD, taking our nature, obeys the law, and undergoes death, in our ſtead. By this means, the threatened *curſe* is executed, in all it's rigour; and free *grace* is exerciſed, in all it's riches. Juſtice maintains her rights, and, with a ſteady hand, adminiſters impartial vengeance; while mercy diſpenſes her pardons, and welcomes the repentant criminal into the tendereſt embraces. Hereby, the ſeemingly thwarting attributes are reconciled. The ſinner is ſaved, not only in *full conſiſtence*, with the honour of the ſupreme perfections; but to the moſt *illuſtrious manifeſtation* of them all.

Where does the divine *power* * ſo ſignally exert itſelf, as in the croſs of CHRIST, and in the conqueſts of grace?—Our LORD, in his loweſt ſtate of humiliation, gained a more glorious victory; than when, through the dividing ſea, and the waſte howling wilderneſs, "he rode upon his chariots and horſes of Salvation." When his hands were riveted, with irons, to the bloody tree; he diſarmed death of it's ſting, and plucked the prey from the jaws of hell. Then, even then, while he was crucified in *weakneſs*, he vanquiſhed the *ſtrong man*, and ſubdued our moſt formidable enemies. Even then, he ſpoiled principalities; triumphed over the powers of darkneſs; and led captivity captive.—Now he is exalted to his heavenly throne, with what a prevailing efficacy does his grace go forth, "conquering, and to conquer!"—By this, the *ſlaves* of ſin are reſcued

* CHRIST, *the wiſdom of GOD, and the power of GOD*, 1 Cor. i. 24.—*To the intent now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church* (by the amazing contrivance, and accompliſhment of it's redemption) *the* deep, extenſive, and (πολυποικιλος) *greatly diverſified wiſdom of GOD.* Eph. iii. 10.

reſcued from their bondage, and reſtored to the *liberty* of righteouſneſs. By this, depraved wretches, whoſe appetites were *ſenſual*, and their diſpoſitions *deviliſh*, are not only renewed, but renewed after the image of GOD, and made partakers of a *divine* nature. Millions, millions of loſt creatures are ſnatched, by the interpoſition of grace, like *brands* from the burning; and, tranſlated into everlaſting manſions, ſhine brighter than the *ſtars*, ſhine bright as the *ſun*, in the kingdom of their Father.

Would you then ſee an incomparably more bright diſplay of the divine excellence, than the unſpotted firmament, the ſpangles of heaven, or the golden fountain of day exhibit? Contemplate JESUS of *Nazareth*. He is the brightneſs of his Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon. In his immaculate nature; in his heavenly tempers; in his moſt holy life; the *moral perfections* of the deity are repreſented, to the higheſt advantage*.—Hark! how *mercy*, with her charming voice, ſpeaks in all he utters. See! how *benevolence* pours her choiceſt ſtores, in all he does. Did ever compaſſion look ſo amiably ſoft, as in thoſe pitying tears; which ſwelled his eyes, and trickled down his cheeks, to bedew the rancour of his inveterate enemies!—Was it poſſible for *patience* to aſſume a form ſo lovely; as that ſweetly-winning conduct, which bore the contradiction of ſinners? Which intreated the obſtinate, to be reconciled; beſought the guilty, not to die?—In other things, we may find ſome *ſcattered* rays of JEHOVAH's glory; but in CHRIST, they are all connected and united. In CHRIST, they beam forth with the ſtrongeſt radiance, with the moſt delightful effulgence. *Out of Sion*, and in *Sion*'s great Redeemer, *hath GOD appeared in perfect beauty*.

Search

* In this ſenſe, that ſaying of our LORD is eminently true, *He that hath ſeen ME, hath ſeen the FATHER.* John xiv. 9.

Search then, my ſoul, above all other purſuits, ſearch the records of redeeming love. Let theſe be the principal objects of thy ſtudy. Here employ thyſelf, with the moſt unwearied aſſiduity.—*In theſe are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge**. *Such wiſdom*; as charms and aſtoniſhes the very angels; engages their cloſeſt attention, and fills them with the deepeſt adoration†. *Such knowledge*; as qualifies the poſſeſſor, if not for offices of dignity on earth, yet for the moſt honourable advancements in the kingdom of heaven. Diſunited from which knowledge, all application is but elaborate impertinence; and all ſcience, no better than pompous ignorance.—Theſe records, contain the faultleſs model of duty, and the nobleſt motives to obedience. Nothing ſo powerful, to work a lively faith, and a joyful hope; as an attentive conſideration of our LORD's unutterable merits. Nothing ſo ſove-

* *Coloſſ.* ii. 3.—Not a mean degree, but a *treaſure*; not one treaſure, but *many*; not many only, but *all* treaſures, of true wiſdom, and ſaving knowledge; are in CHRIST, and his glorious goſpel.—The tranſcendent *excellency* of thoſe treaſures ſeems to be finely intimated, in that other expreſſion *αποκρυφοι*, *hid*; (which may be interpreted by the *Hebrew methmunim*, *Job* iii. 21.) *laid up*, with the utmoſt care, and the greateſt ſafety. Not left at all adventures, to be ſtumbled upon, by every giddy wanderer; or to fall into the arms of the yawning ſluggard; but, like jewels of the brighteſt luſtre, or riches of the higheſt value, *kept in ſtore* to adorn and reward the diligent ſearcher.

† This, I believe, is the *import* of the apoſtle's language, though it is not a *literal* tranſlation of εις α επιθυμουσιν αγγελοι παρακυψαι. 1 *Pet.* i. 12.—I never had ſuch a lively apprehenſion of the beautiful ſignificancy of the laſt word, as when I have attended a diſſection of ſome part of the animal body. In order to diſcern the *minutiæ* of the admirable frame; the latent wonders of art and mechaniſm; the eye is ſo ſharpened, and it's application ſo *intenſely bended*, as gives a very juſt *experimental* comment on that expreſſive phraſe, παρακυψαι. With ſuch earneſt attention, is the everlaſting goſpel contemplated, by the *angelic* orders! How much more, if it were poſſible, does it deſerve the devout and inceſſant conſideration of *human* minds? Since *by them*, it is not only to be ſpeculated, as a bright and raviſhing diſplay of the divine Attributes; but to be applied to their fallen nature, as a moſt benign ſcheme of *recovering* grace; as the ſure and only method of obtaining life and immortality.

reign, to antidote the peſtilential influence of the world, and deliver our affections from a ſlavery to ignoble objects; as an habitual remembrance of his extreme agonies. The genuine, the ever-fruitful *ſource* of all *morality*, is the unfeigned love of CHRIST; and the croſs, the CROSS, is the appointed * *altar*, from which we may fetch a coal †, to inkindle this ſacred fire.

Behold, therefore, *the man*; the matchleſs and ſtupendous man; whoſe practice was a pattern of the moſt exalted virtue, and his perſon the mirror of every divine perfection. Examine the memoirs of his heavenly temper, and exemplary converſation. Contemplate that *choir* of *graces*, which were aſſociated in his mind, and ſhed the higheſt luſtre on all his actions. Familiarize to thy thoughts his inſtructive diſcourſes, and enter into the very ſpirit of his refined doctrines. That the graces may be transfuſed into thy breaſt, and the doctrines tranſcribed in thy life.—Follow him to *Calvary*'s horrid eminence; to *Calvary*'s fatal cataſtrophe. Where innocence, dignity, and merit, were *made perfect through ſufferings*: each ſhining, with all poſſible ſplendor, through the tragical ſcene; ſomewhat like his own radiant bow, then glowing with the greateſt beauty, when appearing on the darkeſt cloud.—Be thy moſt conſtant attention fixed, on that lovely and ſorrowful ſpectacle. Behold the ſpotleſs victim, nailed to the tree, and ſtabbed to the heart. Hear him pouring out prayers, for his murderers; before he poured out his ſoul, for tranſgreſſors. See the wounds that ſtream with forgiveneſs, and *bleed balm* for a diſtempered world. O! ſee the juſtice of the

* *And I*, ſays our LORD, *if I be lifted up from the earth*, and extended on the croſs, *will draw all men unto me*: will give ſuch a rich and tranſcendent diſplay of *my* love, as ſhall conſtitute the moſt powerful and prevailing attractive of *theirs*. *John* xii. 32.

† Alluding to *Iſaiah* vi. 6.

the Almighty and his goodneſs; his mercy and his vengeance; every *tremendous* and *gracious* attribute manifeſted; manifeſted with inexpreſſible glory, in that moſt *ignominious*, yet *grandeſt*, of tranſactions.

Since GOD is ſo inconceivably great, as theſe his marvellous works declare;

Since the great Sov'reign ſends ten thouſand worlds,
To tell us, he reſides above them all,
In glory's unapproachable receſs* ;

how can we forbear haſtening, with *Moſes*, bowing ourſelves to the earth, and worſhipping?

O! what an honourable, as well as advantageous employ, is prayer?—*Advantageous*. By prayer, we cultivate that improving correſpondence with JEHOVAH, we carry on that gladdening intercourſe with his SPIRIT, which muſt begin here, in order to be completed in eternity.—*Honourable*. By prayer, we have acceſs to that mighty potentate; whoſe ſceptre ſways univerſal nature, and whoſe rich regalia fill the ſkies with luſtre. Prayer, places us in his preſence-chamber; while "the blood of ſprinkling," procures us a gracious audience.

Shall I then *bluſh* to be found proſtrate, before the throne of grace? Shall I be *aſhamed* to have it known; that I offer up ſocial ſupplications in the family, or am conſcientious in obſerving my private retirements?

* For this *quotation*, and ſeveral valuable *hints*, I acknowledge myſelf indebted to thoſe beautiful and ſublime poems, intitled *Night-Thoughts*.—Of which I ſhall only ſay, That I receive freſh pleaſure, and richer improvement, from every renewed peruſal. And, I think, I ſhall have reaſon to bleſs the indulgent Beſtower of all wiſdom, for thoſe inſtructive and animating compoſitions, even in my laſt moments. Than which, nothing can more emphatically ſpeak their *ſuperior excellence*, nor give a more ſolid ſatisfaction to their worthy author.—Happy ſhould I think myſelf, if theſe little ſketches of contemplative devotion, might be honoured with the *moſt inferior* degree of the ſame ſucceſs. Might receive a teſtimony, not from the voice of fame, but from the dying lips of ſome edified chriſtian.

Rather, let me glory in this unſpeakable privilege. Let me reckon it the *nobleſt* poſture, to fall low on my knees before his footſtool; and the *higheſt* honour, to enjoy communion with his moſt exalted majeſty.—Incomparably more noble, than to ſit, in perſon, on the triumphal chariot; or to ſtand, in effigy, amidſt the temple of worthies.

Moſt ineſtimable, in ſuch a view, is that promiſe; which ſo often occurs in the prophetic writings, and is the crowning benefit of the new covenant, *I will be thy God**.—Will this ſupremely excellent and Almighty being, vouchſafe to be *my* portion? To ſettle upon a poor ſinner, not the heritage of a county; not the poſſeſſion of the whole earth; but his *own* ever-bleſſed *ſelf*? May I then, through his free condeſcending grace, and the unknown merits of his Son, look upon all theſe infinitely noble attributes as my treaſure? May I regard the *wiſdom*, which ſuperintends ſuch a multitude of worlds, as my guide; the *power*, which produced, and preſerves them in exiſtence, as my guard; the *goodneſs*, which, by an endleſs communication of favours, renders them all ſo many habitations of happineſs, as *my exceeding great reward*?—What a fund of felicity, is included in ſuch a bleſſing! How often does the *Iſraelitiſh* prince exult in the aſſurance, that this unutterable and boundleſs good is his own? Intereſted in this, he bids defiance to every evil, that can be dreaded; and reſts in certain expectation of every bleſſing, that can be deſired. *The LORD is my light, and my Salvation; whom then ſhall I fear? The LORD*, with an air of exultation, he repeats both his affiance, and his challenge, *is the ſtrength of my life; of whom then ſhall I be afraid*†? Nothing ſo effectual, as this appropriating faith, to inſpire a dignity of mind, ſuperior to tranſitory trifles; or to create a calmneſs of temper,

* Heb. viii. 10. † Pſal. xxvii. 1.

temper, unalarmed by vulgar fears, unappalled by death itſelf.—*The* LORD *is my ſhepherd*, ſays the ſame truly gallant and heroic perſonage, *therefore ſhall I lack nothing**. How is it poſſible, he ſhould ſuffer want, who has the all-ſufficient fulneſs for his ſupply? So long as unerring wiſdom is capable of contriving the means; ſo long as uncontroulable power is able to execute them; ſuch a one cannot fail of being ſafe and happy; whether he continue amidſt the viciſſitudes of time, or depart into the unchangeable eternity.

Here, let us ſtand a moment, and humbly contemplate this great GOD, together with ourſelves, in a relative view.—If we reflect on the works of *material* nature, their number incomprehenſible, and their extent unmeaſurable: each of them apart, ſo admirably framed, the connexions of the whole, ſo exquiſitely regulated; and all derived, from one and the ſame glorious agent—If we recollect the far more noble accompliſhments of elegant taſte, and diſcerning judgment; of refined affections, and exalted ſentiments; which are to be found, among the ſeveral orders of *intelligent* exiſtence: and all of them flowing, in rich emanations, from the one ſole fountain of intellectual light—If we farther conſider this author of material beauty, and moral excellency, as a *guardian*, a *governor*, and *benefactor* to all his creatures: ſupporting the whole ſyſtem, and protecting each individual, by an ever-watchful providence; preſiding over the minuteſt affairs, and cauſing all events to terminate in the moſt extenſive good; heaping, with unremitted liberality, his benefits upon every capable object, and making the circuit of the univerſe a ſeminary of happineſs.—Is it poſſible for the human heart, under ſuch captivating views, to be *indifferent* towards this moſt benign, moſt bountiful original of being and of bliſs? Can any be ſo immerſed in-

* Pſal. xxiii. 1.

ſtupidity, as to ſay unto the Almighty—in the language of an irreligious temper, and licentious life, to ſay? "Depart from us; we implore not thy favour; nor de-"ſire the knowledge of thy ways."—Wonder, O *heavens!* be amazed, O *earth!* and let the inhabitants of *both* expreſs their aſtoniſhment, at this unparalleled complication of diſingenuous, ungrateful, deſtructive perverſeneſs!

If we conſider our *fallen* and *imperfect* ſtate; frail in our bodies; enfeebled in our minds; in every part of our conſtitution, and in all the occurrences of life, "like a tottering wall, or a broken hedge."—If we ſurvey our *indigent* and *infirm* ſtate; without holineſs; without ſpiritual ſtrength; our poſſeſſion of preſent conveniencies, intirely dependent on GOD's ſovereign pleaſure; yea, forfeited, juſtly forfeited, with every future hope, by a thouſand aggravated iniquities.—If we add the various *diſaſters* of our condition; agitated as we are by tumultuous paſſions; oppreſſed with diſpiriting fears; held in ſuſpenſe by a variety of perplexing * cares: liable to pains, and expoſed to troubles; troubles from every quarter; troubles of every kind—Can we, amidſt ſo many wants, under ſuch deplorable infirmities, and ſubject to ſuch diſaſtrous accidents—can we be unconcerned,

* *Perplexing*—Thoſe who read the original language of the New Teſtament, are ſufficiently appriſed, that ſuch is the *ſignificancy* of that benevolent diſſuaſive, urged by our LORD, μη μεριμνατε, *Matt.* vi. 25.—I beg leave, for the ſake of the *unlearned* reader, to obſerve; That our tranſlation, though for the moſt part faithful and excellent, has here miſrepreſented our divine Maſter's meaning. *Take no thought* for your food, for your raiment, for your bodily welfare, is not only not the true ſenſe, but the very reverſe of the ſcriptural doctrine. We are required to take a *prudent* and *moderate* thought, for the neceſſaries of life. The ſluggard, who neglects this decent precaution, is ſeverely reprimanded; is ſent to one of the meaneſt animals, to bluſh for his folly, and learn diſcretion from her conduct, *Prov.* vi. 6. Our Saviour's precept, and the exact ſenſe of his expreſſion, is, Take no *anxious* thought; indulge no *perplexing* care. No ſuch care, as may argue an unreaſonable *diſtruſt* of Providence; or may *rend* and *tear* your minds with diſtreſſing, with pernicious ſolicitude.

concerned, whether GOD's omnipotent, irreſiſtible, all-conducting hand be *againſt* us, or *for* us? Imagination itſelf ſhudders at the thought!—Can we reſt ſatisfied, without a well-grounded perſuaſion, that we are *reconciled* to this ſupreme LORD, and the objects of his unchangeable goodneſs!—If there be an abandoned wretch, whoſe apprehenſions are ſo fatally blinded; who is ſo utterly loſt to all ſenſe of his duty, and of his intereſt; let me bewail his *miſery*, while I abhor his impiety. Bewail his miſery; though popularity, with her choiceſt laurels, adorn his brow; though affluence, with her richeſt delicacies, load his table; though half a nation, or half a world, conſpire to call him *happy*.

May I, by a believing application, ſolace myſelf in this everlaſting ſource of love, perfection, and joy! Grant me this requeſt, and I aſk no more.—Only, that I may expect, not with a reluctant anxiety, but with a ready chearfulneſs, the arrival of that important hour; when this veil of fleſh ſhall drop, and the ſhadows of mortality flee away. When I ſhall no longer complain of *obſcure* knowledge; *languid* affections; and *imperfect* fruition—but ſhall ſee the uncreated and immortal majeſty. *See* him, not in this diſtant and unaffecting method, of reaſoning from his works; but with the moſt clear and direct intuition of the mind.—When I ſhall *love* him, not with a cold and contracted ſpirit; but with the moſt lively and inlarged emotions of gratitude.—When I ſhall inceſſantly *enjoy* the light of his countenance; and be united, inſeparably united to his all-glorious GODHEAD.—Take, ye ambitious, unenvied and unoppoſed, take to yourſelves, the toys of ſtate. May I be enabled to *rejoice* in this bleſſed hope; and to *triumph* in that amiable, that adorable, that delightful name, the LORD MY GOD! And I ſhall ſcarce beſtow a thought, on the ſplendid pageantry of the world, unleſs it be to *deſpiſe* it's empty pomp, and to *pity* it's deluded admirers.

All

All theſe bodies, though immenſe in their ſize, and almoſt infinite in their multitude, are *obedient* to the divine command. The GOD of wiſdom "telleth their "numbers," and is intimately acquainted with their various properties. The GOD of power "calleth them "all by their names," and aſſigns them whatſoever office he pleaſes. He *marſhals* all the ſtarry legions, with infinitely greater eaſe, and nicer order; than the moſt expert general, arranges his diſciplined troops. He appoints their *poſts*; he marks their *route*; he fixes the time for their *return*. The poſts, which he appoints, they occupy, without fail. In the route, which he ſettles, they perſevere, without the leaſt deviation. And to the inſtant *, which he fixes for their return, they are preciſely punctual.—He has given them a *law*, which, through a long revolution of ages, ſhall not be broken; unleſs his ſovereign will interpoſes, for it's *repeal*. Then, indeed, the motion of the celeſtial orbs is controuled; their action remains ſuſpended; or their influence receives a new direction.—The *ſun*, at his creation, iſſued forth with a command, to travel perpetually through the heavens. Since which, he has never neglected to perform the great circuit; rejoicing as a giant to "run "his race." But, when it is requiſite to accompliſh the purpoſes of divine love, the orders are countermanded; the flaming courier remits his career; *ſtands ſtill in Gibeon* †; and, for the conveniency of the choſen people, holds back the falling day.—The *moon* was diſpatched with a charge, never to intermit her revolving courſe, till day and night come to an end. But when

* "The planets, and all the innumerable hoſt of heavenly bodies, "perform their courſes and revolutions, with ſo much certainty and "exactneſs, as never once to fail; but, for almoſt 6000 years, come "conſtantly about to the ſame period, in the hundreth part of a mi"nute." STACKHOUSE's *Hiſt. Bible.*

† This is ſpoken in conformity to the ſcripture language, and according to the common notion. With reſpect to the power which effected the alteration; it is much the ſame thing, and alike miraculous; whether the ſun, or the earth, be ſuppoſed to move.

when the children of providence, are to be favoured with an uncommon continuance of light, ſhe halts in her march; makes a ſolemn pauſe *in the valley of Ajalon**; and delays to bring on her attendant train of ſhadows.—When the enemies of the LORD are to be diſcomfited, the *ſtars* are levied into the ſervice; the ſtars are armed, and take the field; *the ſtars, in their courſes, fought againſt Siſera*†.

So dutiful is material nature! So obſequious, in *all* her *forms*, to her Creator's pleaſure!—The bellowing thunders, liſten to his voice; and the vollied lightnings, obſerve the direction of his eye. The flying ſtorm, and impetuous whirlwind, wear his yoke. The raging waves revere his nod: they ſhake the earth; they daſh the ſkies; yet, never offer to paſs the limits, which he has preſcribed.—Even the planetary ſpheres; though vaſtly *larger*, than this wide-extended earth; are, in his hand, as *clay* in the hands of the potter. Though, *ſwifter*

* *Joſh.* x. 12, 13.—The prophet *Habakkuk*, according to his lofty manner, celebrates this event; and points out, in very poetical diction, the deſign of ſo ſurprizing a miracle.—*The ſun and moon ſtood ſtill in their habitation: in the light*, the long-continued and miraculous light, *thy arrows*, edged with deſtruction, *walked* on their awful errand; *in the clear ſhining* of the day, protracted for this very purpoſe, *thy glittering ſpear*, launched by thy people, but guided by thy hand, ſprung to it's prey. *Hab.* iii. 11.

† *Judg.* v. 20.—The ſcriptural phraſe *fought againſt*, will, I hope, be a proper *warrant* for every expreſſion, I have uſed on this occaſion.—The paſſage is generally ſuppoſed to ſignify, that ſome very dreadful *meteors* (which the ſtars were thought to influence) ſuch as fierce flaſhes of *lightning*; impetuous ſhowers of *rain*; and rapid ſtorms of *hail*; were employed by the Almighty to terrify, annoy, and overthrow the enemies of *Iſrael*. If ſo, there cannot be a more clear and lively paraphraſe on the text, than thoſe fine lines of a *Jewiſh* writer.—*His ſevere wrath ſhall HE ſharpen for a ſword*; *and* the world *ſhall* fight *with him* againſt *the ungodly*. *Then, ſhall the* right-aiming thunder-bolts *go abroad*; *and from the* clouds, *as from a* well-drawn bow, *ſhall they fly to the mark*. *And* hail-ſtones, *full of wrath, ſhall be caſt out of a ſtone bow*; *and the* water *of the ſea ſhall rage againſt them*; *and the* floods (as was the caſe of the river *Kiſhon*) *ſhall cruelly drown them*. *Yea, a mighty* wind *ſhall ſtand up againſt them*; *and, like a* ſtorm, *ſhall blow them away*. Wiſd. v. 20, 21, 22, 23.

ſwifter than the northern blaſt, they ſweep the long tracts of æther; yet, are they guided by his reins, and execute whatever he enjoins. All thoſe enormous globes of *central* fire, which beam through the boundleſs azure; in compariſon of which an army of planets, were like a ſwarm of ſummer inſects; thoſe, even thoſe, are conformable to his will, as the *melting wax* to the impreſſed ſeal.—Since *all*, ALL is obedient, throughout the whole aſcent of things, ſhall man be the *only rebel* againſt the Almighty Maker? Shall theſe unruly *appetites*, reject his government, and refuſe their allegiance? Shall theſe headſtrong *paſſions*, break looſe from divine reſtraint; and run wild, in exorbitant ſallies, after their own imaginations?

O my ſoul, be ſtung with remorſe, and overwhelmed with confuſion, at the thought! Is it not a righteous thing, that the bleſſed GOD ſhould ſway the ſceptre with the moſt abſolute authority, over all the creatures, which his power has formed? Eſpecially over thoſe creatures; whom his diſtinguiſhing favour, has endued with the noble principle of reaſon, and made capable of a bliſsful immortality? Sure, if all the ranks of inanimate exiſtence, conform to their Maker's decree, by the *neceſſity* of their nature; this more excellent race of beings, ſhould pay their equal homage, by the *willing* compliance of their affections*.—Come then, all ye *faculties*

* This argument, I acknowledge, is not abſolutely concluſive. But it is popular and ſtriking. Nor can I think myſelf obliged, in ſuch a work; where *fancy* bears a conſiderable ſway; to proceed always with the caution and exactneſs, of a diſputer in the *ſchools*. If there be ſome appearance of analogy, between the fact and the inference, it ſeems ſufficient for my purpoſe; though the deduction ſhould not be neceſſary, nor the proceſs ſtrictly ſyllogiſtical.—One of the *apoſtolic fathers*, has an affecting and ſublime paragraph, which runs intirely in this form:—Ηλιος τε και σεληνη, αστερων τε χορος, καλα την διαλαξην αυτε εν ομονοια, δικα παυσης παρεκκασεως, εξελισσουσιν τους επιταλαμενους αυτοις οριομους. *The ſun, the moon, and the ſtarry choir, without the leaſt deviation, and with the utmoſt harmony*

faculties of my *mind*; come, all ye *powers* of my *body*; give up yourſelves, without a moment's delay, without the leaſt reſerve, to his governance. Stand, like dutiful ſervants, at his footſtool; in an everlaſting readineſs, to *do* whatſoever he requires; to *be* whatſoever he appoints. To further, with united efforts, the purpoſes of his glory in this earthly ſcene: or elſe to ſeparate, without reluctance, at his ſummons; the *one*, to ſleep in the ſilent duſt; the *other*, to advance his honour, in ſome remoter colony of his kingdom.—Thus, may I join with all the works of the LORD, in all places of his dominion, to recognize his univerſal ſupremacy; and proclaim him Sovereign of Souls, as well as Ruler of Worlds.

At my firſt coming abroad, all theſe luminaries were *eclipſed*, by the overpowering luſtre of the ſun. They were all placed in the very ſame ſtations; and played the ſame ſprightly beams; yet, not one of them was ſeen. As the daylight wore away, and the ſober ſhades advanced; *Heſperus*, who leads the ſtarry train, diſcloſed his radiant forehead, and catched my eye. While I ſtood gazing on his bright and beautiful aſpect, ſeveral of his attendants peeped through the blue curtains. Scarce had I turned to obſerve theſe freſh emanations of ſplendor; but others dropt the veil; others ſtole into view. When lo! faſter and more numerous, multitudes ſprung from obſcurity; they poured, in ſhining troops, and in ſweet confuſion, over all the empyrean plain. Till the firmament ſeemed, like one vaſt conſtellation; and "a flood of glory burſt from all "the ſkies."

Is

mony, *perform the revolutions appointed them by the ſupreme decree.* From which remark, and abundance of other ſimilar inſtances, obſervable in the œconomy of nature; he exhorts chriſtians, to a cordial *unanimity* among themſelves, and a dutiful *obedience* to GOD. Vid. *Clem. Rom.* 1 *Ep. ad Corinth. ſect.* 20.—See alſo a beautiful ode in Dr. *Watts*'s Lyric Poems, intitled *The Compariſon and Complaint*, which turns upon this very thought.

Is not ſuch the *riſe*, and ſuch the *progreſs* of a true *converſion*, in the prejudiced infidel, or inattentive ſinner? During the period of his vainer years, a thouſand intereſting truths, lay utterly undiſcovered; a thouſand momentous concerns, were intirely diſregarded. But, when divine grace diſſipates the deluſive glitter, which dazled his underſtanding, and beguiled his affections: then, he begins to diſcern, dimly to diſcern, the things which belong unto his peace. Some admonition of ſcripture, darts conviction into his ſoul; as the glimmering of a ſtar, pierces the gloom of night.—Then, perhaps, another awful, or chearing text, impreſſes terror, or diffuſes comfort. A *threatening* alarms his fears, or a *promiſe* awakens his hopes. This, poſſibly, is ſucceeded by ſome *afflictive* diſpenſation of providence; and improved by ſome edifying and *inſtructive* converſation. All which is eſtabliſhed, as to it's continuance; and inlarged, as to it's influence; by a diligent ſtudy of the ſacred word.—By this means, new truths continually pour their evidence. Scenes of refined and exalted, but hitherto unknown delight, addreſs him with their attractives. New deſires take wing; new purſuits are ſet on foot. A new turn of mind forms his temper; a new habit of converſation regulates his life. In a word; *old things are paſſed away*; *and all things become new*. He, who was ſomtimes darkneſs, is now light, and life, and joy in the LORD.

The more attentively I view the cryſtal concave, the more fully I diſcern the richneſs of it's decorations. Abundance of minuter lights, which lay concealed from a *ſuperficial* notice, are viſible on a *cloſer* examination. Eſpecially in thoſe tracts of the ſky, which are called the *Galaxy*; and are diſtinguiſhable, by a ſort of milky path. There, the ſtars are crouded, rather than diſſeminated. The region ſeems to be all on a blaze, with their blended rays.—Beſides this vaſt profuſion, which

in

in my preſent ſituation the eye diſcovers; was I to make my ſurvey, from any other part of the globe, lying nearer the ſouthern pole; I ſhould behold a *new choir* of ſtarry bodies, which have never appeared within our horizon.—Was I (which is ſtill more wonderful) either here or there to view the firmament with the virtuoſo's glaſs; I ſhould find a prodigious multitude of flaming orbs, which, immerſed in depths of æther, eſcape the keeneſt unaſſiſted ſight *.—Yet, in theſe various ſituations, even with the aid of the teleſcopic tube; I ſhould not be able to deſcry the half, perhaps not a *thouſandth* part, of thoſe majeſtic luminaries, which the vaſt expanſive heavens contain †.—So, the more diligently I purſue my ſearch, into thoſe oracles of eternal truth, the *ſcriptures*; I perceive a wider, a deeper, an ever increaſing fund of ſpiritual treaſures. I perceive the brighter ſtrokes of wiſdom, and the richer diſplays of goodneſs; a more tranſcendent excellency in the illuſtrious Meſſiah, and a more deplorable vileneſs in fallen man; a more immaculate purity in GOD's law, and more precious privileges in his goſpel. Yet, after a courſe of ſtudy, ever ſo aſſiduous; ever ſo prolonged; I ſhould have reaſon to own myſelf, a mere *babe* in heavenly knowledge; or, at moſt, but a *puerile* proficient, in the ſchool of CHRIST.

* Come forth, O man, yon azure round ſurvey,
And view thoſe lamps, which yield eternal day.
Bring forth thy glaſſes, clear thy wond'ring eyes:
Millions beyond the former millions riſe:
Look farther:—millions more blaze from remoter ſkies.
See an ingenious Poem, intitled The Univerſe.

† How noble, conſidered in this view, are the celebrations of the Divine Majeſty, which frequently occur in the ſacred writings! *It is the Lord that made the heavens*, Pſal. xcvi. 5.—What a prodigious dignity, does ſuch a ſenſe of things give to that devout aſcription of praiſe! *Thou, even thou, art LORD alone: Thou haſt made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their hoſt*, Nehem. ix. 6.—Examined by this rule, the beautiful climax in our inſpired hymn, is ſublime beyond compare. *Praiſe HIM, ſun and moon: praiſe HIM, all ye ſtars of light: praiſe him, ye heavens of heavens*, Pſal. cxlviii. 3, 4.

After all my moſt accurate inſpection, thoſe ſtarry orbs, appear but as *glittering points*. Even the planets, though ſo much nearer our earthly manſion, ſeem only like burning *bullets*. If then, we have ſuch *imperfect apprehenſions* of viſible and material things; how much more ſcanty and inadequate, muſt be our notions of inviſible and immortal objects!—We behold the ſtars. Though every one is incomparably bigger, than the globe we inhabit; yet they dwindle, upon our ſurvey, into the moſt diminutive forms. Thus, we ſee by faith the glories of the bleſſed JESUS; the atoning efficacy of his death; the juſtifying merit of his righteouſneſs; and the joys which are reſerved for his followers. But alas! even our moſt *exalted* ideas, are vaſtly *below* the truth. As much below the truth; as the report, which our eyes make of thoſe celeſtial edifices, is inferior to their real grandeur.—Should we take in all the *magnifying* aſſiſtances, which art has contrived; thoſe luminous bodies, would elude our ſkill, and appear as *ſmall* as ever. Should an inhabitant of earth, travel towards the cope of heaven; and be carried forwards, in his ærial journey, more than a hundred and ſixty millions of miles *; even in that advanced ſituation, thoſe *oceans* of *flame*, would look no larger, than *radiant ſpecks*.—In like manner conceive even ſo magnificently of the Redeemer's honours; and of the bliſs, which he has purchaſed for his people; yet you will fall ſhort. Raiſe your imagination *higher*; ſtretch your invention *wider*; give them *all* the ſcope, which a ſoaring and excurſive fancy can take; ſtill, your conceptions will be extremely *diſproportionate*, to their genuine perfections.—Vaſt are the bodies, which roll in

* This, incredible as it may ſeem, is not a mere ſuppoſition, but a real fact. For, about the twenty-firſt of *December*, we are above 160,000,000 of miles nearer the northern parts of the ſky, than we were at the twenty-firſt of *June*. And yet, with regard to the ſtars ſituate in that quarter, we perceive no *change* in their *aſpect*, nor any *augmentation* of their *magnitude*.

in the expanſe of heaven: vaſter far are thoſe fields of æther, through which they run their endleſs round: but the excellency of JESUS, and the happineſs laid up for his ſervants, are greater than *either*; than *both*; than *all*. An inſpired writer calls the former, "the "unſearchable riches of CHRIST;" and ſtiles the latter, "an exceeding great and eternal weight of "glory."

If thoſe ſtars, are ſo many inexhauſtible magazines of fire, and immenſe *reſervoirs* of light; there is no reaſon to doubt, but they have ſome very *grand uſes*, ſuitable to the magnificence of their nature. To ſpecify, or explain, the particular purpoſes they anſwer; is altogether impoſſible, in our preſent ſtate of diſtance and ignorance. This, however, we may clearly diſcern; they are diſpoſed in that very manner, which is moſt *phaſing* and moſt *ſerviceable* to mankind.—They are not placed at an *infinite remove*, ſo as to lie beyond our ſight; neither are they brought *ſo near* our abode, as to annoy us with their beams. We ſee them ſhine on every ſide. The deep azure, which ſerves them as a ground, heightens their ſplendor. At the ſame time, their influence is gentle, and their rays are deſtitute of heat. So that we are ſurrounded with a multitude of fiery globes, which beautify and illuminate the firmament, without any riſque, either to the *coolneſs* of our night, or the *quiet* of our repoſe.—Who can ſufficiently admire that wondrous benignity; which, on our account, ſtrews the *earth* with bleſſings of every kind; and vouchſafes to make the *very heavens*, ſubſervient to our delight?

It is not ſolely to adorn the roof of our palace, with coſtly gildings; that GOD commands the celeſtial luminaries to glitter through the gloom. We alſo reap conſiderable benefits, from their miniſtry.—They *divide* our *time*, and fix it's ſolemn periods. They ſettle the *order* of our *works*; and are, according to the deſtina-

tion mentioned in ſacred writ, "for ſigns, and for ſea-"ſons; for days, and for years." The returns of heat and cold alone, would have been too precarious a rule. But theſe radiant bodies; by the *variation*, and alſo by the *regularity*, of their motions; afford a method of calculating, abſolutely certain, and ſufficiently obvious. By this, the *farmer* is inſtructed, when to commit his grain to the furrows, and how to conduct the operations of huſbandry. By this, the *ſailor* knows when to proceed on his voyage, with leaſt peril; and how to carry on the buſineſs of navigation, with moſt ſucceſs.

Why ſhould not the chriſtian, the probationer for eternity, learn from the ſame monitors, to *number*—for nobler purpoſes, to number his days; and duly to tranſact the grand, grand affairs of his everlaſting ſalvation? Since GOD has appointed ſo many bright meaſures of our time, to determine it's larger periods, and to minute down it's ordinary ſtages; ſure, this moſt ſtrongly inculcates it's *value*, and ſhould powerfully prompt us to *improve* it.—Behold! the ſupreme LORD marks the progreſs of our life, in that moſt conſpicuous kalendar above. Does not ſuch an ordination tell us, and in the moſt emphatical language; that our life is given for *uſe*, not for *waſte*? That no portion of it is delivered, but under a ſtrict account; that all of it is entered, as it paſſes, in the divine regiſter; and, therefore, that the ſtewards of ſuch a talent, are to expect a future reckoning?—Behold! the very heavens are bidden to be the *accomptants*, of our years, and months, and days. O! may this induce us to manage them, with a vigilant frugality; to part with them, as miſers with their *hoarded treaſure*, warily and circumſpectly; and, if poſſible, as merchants, with their *rich commodities*, not without an equivalent, either in perſonal improvement, or ſocial uſefulneſs!

How

How *bright* the ſtarry diamonds ſhine! The ambition of eaſtern monarchs could imagine no diſtinction, more noble and ſublime, than that of being likened to thoſe beaming orbs *.— They form night's *richeſt dreſs*; and ſparkle upon her ſable robe, like jewels of the fineſt luſtre. Like jewels! I wrong their character. The lucid ſtone has no brilliancy; quenched is the flame even of the golden topaz; compared with thoſe glowing decorations of heaven.—How widely are their radiant honours *diffuſed!* No nation ſo remote, but ſees their beauty, and rejoices in their uſefulneſs. They have been admired by all preceding generations; and every riſing age will gaze on their charms, with renewed delight.—How *animating*, then, is that promiſe, made to the faithful miniſters of the goſpel! "They that "turn many to righteouſneſs, ſhall ſhine as the ſtars "for ever and ever †." Is not this a moſt winning encouragement, "to ſpend, and be ſpent," in the ſervice of ſouls? Methinks, the ſtars beckon, as they twinkle. Methinks, they ſhew me their ſplendors, on purpoſe to inſpire me with *alacrity*, in the race ſet before me; on purpoſe to enliven my *activity*, in the work that is given me to do.—Yes; ye majeſtic monitors, I underſtand your meaning. If honour has any charms; if true glory, the glory which cometh from God, is any attractive; you diſplay the moſt powerful incitements, to exerciſe all aſſiduity in my holy vocation. I will, henceforth, obſerve your intimation; and, when zeal becomes *languid*, have recourſe to your heavenly lamps. If ſo be, I may *rekindle* it's ardor, at thoſe inextinguiſhable fires.

Of the *polar* ſtar, it is obſervable; that, while other luminaries *alter* their ſituation, this ſeems invariably

* Numb. xxiv. 17. Dan. viii. 10.

† Dan. xii. 3.

fixed *. While other luminaries, now, mount the battlements of heaven, and appear upon duty; now, retire beneath the horizon, and reſign to a freſh ſet, the watches of the night; this never departs from it's ſtation. This, in every ſeaſon, maintains an uniform poſition; and is always to be found, in the ſame tract of the northern ſky.—How often has this beamed bright intelligence on the *ſailor*; and conducted the keel to it's deſired haven! In early ages, thoſe, who went down to the ſea in ſhips, and occupied their buſineſs in great waters, had ſcarce any other ſure guide for their wandering veſſel. This therefore they viewed, with the moſt ſolicitous attention. By this, they formed their obſervations, and regulated their voyage. When this was obſcured by clouds, or inveloped in miſts; the trembling mariner was *bewildered*, on the watery waſte. His thoughts fluctuated, as much as the floating ſurge; and he knew not, *where* he was advanced, or *whither* he ſhould ſteer. But, when this auſpicious ſtar broke through the gloom; it diſſipated the anxiety of his mind, and cleared up his dubious paſſage. He re-aſſumed, with alacrity, the management of the helm; and was able to ſhape his courſe, with ſome tolerable degree of ſatisfaction and certainty.

Such, only much clearer in it's light, and much ſurer in it's direction, is the *holy word* of GOD, to thoſe myriads of intellectual beings, who are bound for the eternal ſhores. Who, embarked in a veſſel of feeble fleſh, are to paſs the waves of this tempeſtuous and perilous world. In all *difficulties*, thoſe ſacred pages ſhed an encouraging ray; in all *uncertainties*, they ſuggeſt the right determination, and point out the proper procedure. What is ſtill a more ineſtimable advantage; they, like

* I ſpeak in conformity to the *appearance* of the object. For, though this remarkable ſtar revolves round the Pole, it's motion is ſo *ſlow*, and the circle it deſcribes ſo *ſmall*; as render both the revolution and change of ſituation, hardly perceivable.

like the ſtar which conducted the eaſtern ſages, make plain the way of acceſs to a *Redeemer*. They diſplay his unſpeakable merits; they diſcover the method of being intereſted in his great atonement; and lead the weary ſoul, *toſſed* by troubles, and *ſhattered* by temptations, to that only harbour of peaceful repoſe.—Let us, therefore, attend to this *unerring* directory, with the ſame conſtancy of regard, as the ſea-faring man obſerves his compaſs. Let us become as thoroughly acquainted with this ſacred chart, as the pilot is with every truſty mark, that gives notice of a lurking rock; and with every open road, that yields a ſafe paſſage into the port. Above all, let us commit ourſelves to this infallible guidance, with the ſame implicit reſignation; let us conform our conduct to it's exalted precepts, with the ſame ſedulous care; as the children of *Iſrael*, when ſojourning in the trackleſs deſart, followed the pillar of fire, and the motions of the miraculous cloud.—So, will it introduce us, not into an earthly *Canaan*, flowing with milk and honey; but into an *immortal* paradiſe, where is the fulneſs of joy, and where are pleaſures for evermore. It will introduce us into thoſe happy, happy regions, where *our ſun ſhall no more go down, nor our moon withdraw itſelf; for the* LORD *ſhall be our everlaſting light, and the days of our mourning*, together with the fatigues of our pilgrimage, *ſhall be ended* *.

I perceive a great *variety*, in the ſize and ſplendor of thoſe gems of heaven. Some, are of the firſt magnitude; others, of an inferior order. Some *glow*, with intenſe flames; others *glimmer*, with fainter beams. Yet, *all* are beautiful; all have their peculiar luſtre, and diſtinct uſe; all tend, in their different degrees, to enamel the cope of heaven, and embroider the robe of night.—This circumſtance is remarked by an author, whoſe ſentiments are a ſource of wiſdom, and the very ſtandard

* Iſa. lx. 20.

ſtandard of truth. "One ſtar, ſays the apoſtle to the "*Gentiles*, *differeth* from another ſtar in glory: *So* alſo "is the reſurrection of the dead."

In the world above, are various *degrees* of happineſs, various ſeats of honour. Some will riſe to more illuſtrious diſtinctions, and richer joys *. Some, like veſſels of ample capacity, will admit more copious acceſſions of light and excellence. Yet, there will be no want, no deficiency, in any; but a fulneſs both of divine ſatisfactions, and perſonal perfections. *Each* will enjoy *all* the good; and be adorned with *all* the glory; that his heart can wiſh, or his condition receive.—None will know what it is to envy. Not the leaſt malevolence, nor the leaſt ſelfiſhneſs, but everlaſting friendſhip prevails, and a mutual complacency in each other's delight. Love, cordial love, will give every particular ſaint, a participation of all the fruitions †; which are diffuſed through the whole aſſembly of the bleſſed.—No one *eclipſes*, but each *reflects light* upon his brother. A ſweet interchange of rays ſubſiſts; all enlightened by the great fountain, and all enlightening one another. By which reciprocal communication of pleaſure and amity, each will be continually *receiving from*, each inceſſantly *adding to*, the general felicity.

Happy, ſupremely happy they, who are admitted into the celeſtial manſions. Better to be a door-keeper in thoſe "ivory palaces ‡," than to fill the moſt gorgeous throne on earth. The very loweſt place at GOD's right-hand, is diſtinguiſhed honour, and conſummate bliſs.—O! that we may, in ſome meaſure, anticipate that beatific ſtate, while we remain in our baniſhment below!

* 1 *Cor.* xv. 41, 42. The great Mr. *Mede prefers* the ſenſe here given; and the learned Dr. *Hammond admits* it, into his paraphraſe. Whoſe joint authority, though far from excluding any *other*, yet is a ſufficient warrant for *this* application of the words.

† *Tolle invidiam, & tuum eſt quod habeo: Tolle invidiam, & meum eſt quod habes.* AUGUSTINE.

‡ Pſal. xlv. 8.

below! May we, *by rejoicing* in the ſuperior proſperity of another, make it *our own!* And, provided the general reſult is harmony, be content, be pleaſed, with whatſoever part is aſſigned to our ſhare, in the univerſal choir of affairs.

While I am conſidering the heavenly bodies, I muſt not intirely forget thoſe fundamental laws of our modern aſtronomy, *projection* and *attraction*. One of which is the all-combining cement, the other is the ever operative ſpring, of the mighty frame.—In the beginning, the all-creating FIAT impreſſed a proper degree of motion, on each of thoſe whirling orbs. Which, if not controuled, would have carried them on, in ſtrait lines, and to endleſs lengths; till they were even loſt, in the abyſs of ſpace. But, the *gravitating* property, being added to the *projectile* force, determined their courſes to a *circular* * form; and obliged the reluctant rovers, to perform their deſtined rounds.—Were either of thoſe cauſes to ſuſpend their action, all the harmoniouſly moving ſpheres would be diſconcerted. Would degenerate into ſluggiſh inactive maſſes; and, falling into the central fire, be *burnt* to aſhes. Or elſe, would exorbitate into wild confuſion; and each, by the rapidity of it's whirl, be *diſſipated* into atoms. But, the impulſive and attractive energy, being moſt nicely attempered to each other;

* I am aware, the planetary orbits are not ſtrictly circular, but rather *elliptical*. However, as they are but a ſmall remove from the perfectly round figure; and partake of it incomparably more, than the trajectories of the comets; I chooſe to repreſent the thing in this view. Eſpecially, becauſe the notion of a circle, is ſo much more intelligible to the generality of readers, than that of an ellipſis; and becauſe I laid it down for a rule, not to admit any ſuch *abſtruſe* ſentiment, or *difficult* expreſſion, as ſhould demand a painful attention, inſtead of raiſing an agreeable idea. For which reaſon, I have avoided *technical* terms; have taken no notice of *Jupiter*'s ſatellities, or *Saturn*'s ring; have not ſo much as mentioned the names of the planets, nor attempted to wade into any depths of the ſcience. Leſt to thoſe who have no opportunity of uſing the teleſcope, or of acquainting themſelves with a ſyſtem of aſtronomy, I ſhould propound riddles, rather than diſplay *entertaining* and *edifying* truths.

other; and, under the immediate operation of the Almighty, exerting themſelves in perpetual concert; the various globes run their radiant races, without the leaſt interruption, or the leaſt deviation: So as to create the alternate changes of *day* and *night*, and diſtribute the uſeful viciſſitudes of *ſucceeding ſeaſons*: So as to anſwer all the great ends of a gracious providence, and procure every comfortable convenience for univerſal nature.

Does not this conſtitution of the material, very naturally lead the thoughts, to thoſe grand principles of the moral and devotional world, *faith* and *love*?—Theſe are often celebrated by the inſpired apoſtle, as a comprehenſive ſummary of the goſpel *. Theſe inſpirit the breaſt, and regulate the progreſs, of each private chriſtian. Theſe unite the whole congregation of the faithful to GOD, and one another. To GOD, the great centre, in the bonds of gratitude and devotion: to one another, by a reciprocal intercourſe of brotherly affections, and friendly offices. If you aſk; Why is it impoſſible for the true believer, to live at all adventures? to *ſtagnate* in ſloth, or habitually to deviate from duty? We anſwer; It is owing to "his faith, working by "love †." He aſſuredly truſts, that CHRIST has ſuſtained the infamy, and endured the torment, due to his ſins. He firmly relies on that divine propitiation, for the pardon of all his guilt; and humbly expects everlaſting ſalvation, as the purchaſe of his Saviour's merits. This produces ſuch a ſpirit of gratitude, as refines his inclinations, and animates his whole behaviour. He cannot, he cannot run to exceſs of riot; becauſe love to his adorable Redeemer, like a ſtrong, but ſilken *curb*, ſweetly reſtrains him. He cannot, he cannot lie lulled in a lethargic indolence; becauſe love to the ſame infinite benefactor, like a pungent, but endearing *ſpur*, pleaſingly excites him. In a word; faith ſupplies the powerful

* Col. i. 4. Philem. ver. 5. † Gal. v. 6.

powerful impulſe, while love gives the determining biaſs; and leads the willing feet, through the whole circle of GOD's commandments. By the united efficacy of theſe *heavenly graces*, the chriſtian conduct is preſerved, in the uniformity and beauty of holineſs; as by the blended power of thoſe *Newtonian principles*, the ſolar ſyſtem revolves, in a ſteady and magnificent regularity.

How admirable, how extenſive, how diverſified, is the force of this ſingle principle, *Attraction* * *!*—This penetrates the very eſſence of all bodies, and diffuſes itſelf to the remoteſt limits of the mundane ſyſtem.—By this, the worlds impreſſed with motion, hang *ſelf-balanced* on their centres †; and, though orbs of immenſe magnitude, require nothing, but this amazing property, for their ſupport.—To this we aſcribe a phænomenon, of a very different kind, the *preſſure* of the atmoſphere. Which, though a yielding and expanſive fluid; yet conſtipated by an attractive energy; ſurrounds the whole globe, and incloſes every creature, as it were with a tight bandage. An expedient this, abſolutely neceſſary to preſerve the texture of our bodies; and indeed, to maintain every ſpecies of animal exiſtence.—Attraction! Urged by this wonderful impetus, the *rivers* circulate, copious and unintermitted, among all the nations of the earth: ſweeping with rapidity down the ſteeps, or ſoftly ebbing through the plains. Impelled by the ſame myſterious force, the *nutritious juices* are detached from the ſoil; and, aſcending the trees, find their way through millions of the fineſt meanders, in order to transfuſe vegetative life into all the branches. —This confines the *ocean*, within proper bounds. Tho' the waves thereof roar; though they toſs themſelves, with all the madneſs of indignant rage; yet, checked by this potent, this inevitable curb, they are unable to paſs even the ſlighteſt barrier of ſand. To this the *mountains*

* I mean the attraction both of *Gravitation* and *Coheſion*.

† *Ponderibus librata ſuis.*

tains owe that unſhaken firmneſs, which laughs at the ſhock of careering winds; and bids the tempeſt, with all it's mingled horrors, impotently rave.—By virtue of this inviſible mechaniſm; without the aid of crane or pulley, or any inſtrument of human device; many thouſand tons of water are *raiſed*, every moment, into the regions of the firmament. By this, they continue *ſuſpended* in thin air, without any capacious ciſtern, to contain their ſubſtance; or any maſſy pillars, to ſuſtain their weight. By this ſame variouſly acting power, they return to the place of their native reſidence; *diſtilled* in gentle falls of dew, or *precipitated* in impetuous ſhowers of rain. They *ſlide* into the fields in fleecy flights of ſnow, or are *darted* upon the houſes in clattering ſtorms of hail.—This occaſions the ſtrong *coheſion* of ſolid bodies. Without which, our large machines could exert themſelves with no vigour; and the nicer utenſils of life, would elude our expectations of ſervice. This affords a foundation, for all thoſe delicate or noble mechanic arts; which furniſh mankind with numberleſs conveniencies both of ornament and delight.—In ſhort; this is the prodigious *ballaſt*, which compoſes the equilibrium, and conſtitutes the ſtability of things: this, the great *chain*, which forms the connections of univerſal nature; and the mighty *engine*, which prompts, facilitates, and, in good meaſure, accompliſhes all her operations.—What *complicated* effects, from a *ſingle* cauſe*! What profuſion, amidſt frugality! An unknown profuſion of benefits, with the utmoſt frugality of expence!

And what *is* this attraction? Is it a quality, in it's exiſtence, inſeparable from matter; and, in it's acting, independent on the DEITY?—Quite the reverſe. It is the very *finger* of GOD: the conſtant impreſſion of divine

* See another remarkable inſtance of this kind, in the *Reflections on a Flower-Garden*, page 99.—together with a fine obſervation, ſuggeſted in the correſponding note.

divine power: a principle, neither innate in matter, nor intelligible by mortals.—Does it not, however, bear a conſiderable analogy to the *agency* of the HOLY GHOST, in the chriſtian œconomy? Are not the gracious operations of the bleſſed Spirit, thus *extenſive*, thus *admirable*, thus *various*?—That Almighty Being tranſmits his gifts, through every age; and communicates his graces, to every adherent on the Redeemer. All, either of illuſtrious memory, or of beneficial tendency; in a word, "all the good that is done upon "earth, He doth it himſelf." Strong in *his* aid, and in the power of *his* might, the ſaints of all times, have trod vice under their feet; have triumphed over this abject world; and converſed in heaven, while they dwelt on earth. *Not I, but the grace of GOD which was with me**, is the unanimous acknowledgment of them all.—By the ſame kindly ſuccours, the whole church is ſtill enlightened, quickened, and governed. Through his benign influences, the ſcales of *ignorance*, fall from the underſtanding; the leproſy of *evil* concupiſcence, is purged from the will; and the fetters, the more than adamantine fetters of *habitual* iniquity, drop off from the converſation. He breathes even upon dry bones†, and they live: they are animated with faith; they pant with ardent and heavenly deſire; they exerciſe themſelves in all the duties of godlineſs.—His real, though ſecret, inſpiration, diſſolves the flint in the impenitent breaſt; and binds up the ſorrows, of the broken heart. Raiſes the thoughts high, in the elevations of holy hope; yet lays them low, in the humiliations of inward abaſement. *Steels* the ſoul with impenetrable reſolution, and perſevering fortitude; at the ſame time, *ſoftens* it into a dove-like meekneſs, and *melts* it in penitential ſorrow.

* 1 Cor. xv. 10.

† See that beautiful piece of ſacred and allegorical imagery diſplayed, *Ezek.* xxxvii.

When I contemplate thoſe ample and magnificent ſtructures, erected over all the æthereal plains:—When I look upon them as ſo many ſplendid repoſitories of light, or fruitful abodes of life:—When I remember, that there may be other orbs, vaſtly more remote, than thoſe which appear to our unaided ſight; orbs, whoſe effulgence, though travelling ever ſince the creation, is not yet arrived upon our coaſts*:—When I ſtretch my thoughts to the innumerable orders of being, which inhabit all thoſe ſpacious ſyſtems; from the *loftieſt ſeraph*, to the loweſt reptile; from the armies of angels, which ſurround the throne of JEHOVAH; to the *puny nations*, which tinge with blue the ſurface of the plum†, or mantle the ſtanding pool with green:—How various appear the links in this immenſe chain! How vaſt the gradations, in this univerſal ſcale of exiſtence! Yet all theſe, though ever ſo vaſt and various, are the *work* of GOD's hand, and are full of his *preſence*.

He

* If this conjecture (which has no leſs a perſon than the celebrated Mr. *Huygens* for it's author) concerning *unſeen ſtars*, be true—If, to this obſervation, be added, what is affirmed by our ſkilful aſtronomers; that the motion of the rays of light is ſo *ſurprizingly ſwift*, as to paſs through ten millions of miles in a ſingle minute—How vaſt! beyond imagination vaſt and unmeaſurable, are the ſpaces of the univerſe!—While the mind is diſtended with the *grand idea*; or rather, while ſhe is diſpatching her ableſt powers of piercing judgment, and excurſive fancy; and finds them all *drop ſhort*; all baffled by the amazing ſubject: Permit me to apply that ſpirited exclamation, and noble remark—

——— Say, proud arch,
Built with divine ambition; in diſdain
Of limit built; built in the taſte of heav'n!
Vaſt concave! ample dome! Waſt thou deſign'd
A *meet* apartment for the DEITY?
Not ſo: that thought alone thy ſtate impairs:
Thy *lofty* ſinks; and ſhallows thy *profound*;
And ſtreightens thy *diffuſive*.——— *Night-Thoughts*, No. IX.

† Ev'n the *blue down* the purple plum ſurrounds,
A *living world*, thy failing ſight confounds,
To HIM a peopled habitation ſhews,
Where millions taſte the bounty GOD beſtows.
See a beautiful and inſtructive Poem, ſtiled—DEITY.

He rounded in his palm thoſe dreadfully large globes, which are pendulous in the vault of heaven. He kindled thoſe aſtoniſhingly bright fires, which fill the firmament with a flood of glory. By him they are ſuſpended in *fluid* æther, and cannot be ſhaken: by him they diſpenſe a *perpetual* tide of beams, and are never exhauſted.—He formed, with inexpreſſible nicety, that delicately fine collection of tubes; that unknown multiplicity of ſubtle ſprings; which organize, and actuate, the frame of the minuteſt inſect. He bids the crimſon current roll; the vital movements play; and aſſociates a world of wonders, even in an *animated point* *.—In all theſe, is a ſignal exhibition of creating power; to all theſe, are extended, the ſpecial regards of preſerving goodneſs. From hence, let me learn to rely on the providence, and to revere the preſence, of the ſupreme Majeſty.

To *rely* on his *providence*.—For, amidſt that inconceivable number and variety of beings, which ſwarm through the regions of creation, not one is overlooked, not one is neglected, by the great omnipotent cauſe of all. However inconſiderable in it's character, or diminutive in it's ſize, it is ſtill the production of the univerſal Maker, and belongs to the family of the Almighty

* There are living creatures, abundantly ſmaller than the mite. Mr. *Bradley*, in his Treatiſe on Gardening, mentions an inſect, which, after accurate examination, he found to be a thouſand times *leſs* than the *leaſt* viſible grain of ſand. Yet ſuch an inſect, though quite imperceptible to the naked eye, is an elephant, is a whale, compared with other animalcules almoſt infinitely more minute, diſcovered by Mr. *Lewenhoeck*.—If we conſider the ſeveral limbs, which compoſe ſuch an organized particle: the different muſcles, which actuate ſuch a ſet of limbs: the flow of ſpirits, incomparably more attenuated, which put thoſe muſcles in motion: the various fluids which circulate: the different ſecretions, which are performed: together with the peculiar minuteneſs of the ſolids, before they arrive at their full growth: not to mention other *more aſtoniſhing* modes of diminution: —Sure, we ſhall have the utmoſt reaſon to acknowledge, that the adored Maker is—MAXIMUS IN MINIMIS; *greatly glorious* even in his *ſmalleſt* works.

Father.—What? though inthroned archangels, enjoy the *ſmiles* of his *countenance!* Yet, the low inhabitants of earth, the moſt deſpicable worms of the ground, are not excluded from his *providential care.* Though the manifeſtation of his perfections, is vouchſafed to holy and intellectual eſſences; his ear is open, to the cries of the young raven. His eye is attentive, to the wants, and to the welfare, of the very meaneſt births of nature.—How much leſs then, are his own people diſregarded? Thoſe, for whom he has delivered his beloved Son to death, and for whom he has prepared habitations of eternal joy. *They* diſregarded! No. THEY are "kept as the apple of an eye." The very hairs of their head are all numbered. The fondeſt mother may *forget* the infant, that is "dandled upon her knees," and ſucks at her breaſt*; much ſooner than the Father of

* *Iſa.* xlix. 15. *Can a woman forget her ſucking child, that ſhe ſhould not have compaſſion on the ſon of her womb? Yea, they may forget; yet will I not forget thee.*—How delicate and expreſſive are the images, in this charming ſcripture! How full of *beauty*, if beheld in a critical, how rich with *conſolation*, if conſidered in a believing, view!—Can a *woman?* One of the ſofter ſex; whoſe nature is moſt impreſſible, and whoſe paſſions are remarkably tender—Can ſuch a one, not barely diſregard, but intirely *forget*; not ſuſpend her care for a while, but utterly eraſe the very memory—Of her *child*; her own child, not another's; a child, that was formed in her *womb*, and is a part of herſelf?—Her *ſon*; the more important, and therefore more deſirable ſpecies; to whom it peculiarly belongs to preſerve the name, and build up the family—Her *only* ſon; for the word is ſingular; and refers to a caſe, where the offſpring, not being numerous, but centered in a ſingle birth, muſt be productive of the fondeſt endearment—Can ſhe diveſt herſelf of all concern for ſuch a child; not when he is grown up to maturity, or gone abroad from her houſe; but, while he continues in an infantile ſtate; and muſt owe his whole ſafety to her kind attendance; while he lies in her boſom, reſts on her arm, and even *ſucks* at her breaſt?—Eſpecially, if the poor innocent be racked with pain, or ſeized by ſome ſevere affliction; and ſo become an object of *compaſſion*, as well as of love. Can ſhe hear it's piercing cries; can ſhe ſee it all reſtleſs, all helpleſs under it's miſery; and feel no emotions of parental pity?—If *one* ſuch monſter of inhumanity might be found; could *all* (here the prophet, to give his compariſon the utmoſt energy, changes the ſingular number into the plural. It is not *gem eja*, or *gem aheth*, but *gem ale*) could *all* mothers be ſo degenerate?

of everlaſting compaſſions can *diſcontinue*, or *remit*, his watchful tenderneſs to his people—his children—his heirs.

Let this teach me alſo a more lively ſenſe of the *divine preſence*—All the rolling worlds above; all the living atoms below; together with all the beings that intervene, betwixt theſe wide extremes; are vouchers for an ever-preſent Deity. "God has not left himſelf "without witneſs." The marks of his footſteps are evident in every place, and the touches of his finger diſtinguiſhable in every creature. "*Thy name is ſo nigh*, "O thou all-ſupporting, all-informing Lord; *and* "*that do thy wondrous works declare**. Thy goodneſs "warms in the morning ſun, and refreſhes in the even-"ing breeze. Thy glory ſhines in the lamps of mid-"night, and ſmiles in the bloſſoms of ſpring. We ſee "a *trace* of thy incomprehenſible grandeur, in the "*boundleſs* extent of things; and a *ſketch* of thy exqui-"ſite ſkill, in thoſe almoſt *evaneſcent* ſparks of life, "the inſect race."—How ſtupid is this heart of mine, that, amidſt ſuch a multitude of remembrancers, thronging on every ſide, I ſhould forget thee a ſingle moment! Grant me, thou great I AM; thou ſource, and ſupport, of univerſal exiſtence—O! grant me an enlightened eye, to *diſcern* thee in every object; and a devout heart, to *adore* thee on every occaſion. Inſtead of living without God in the world; may I be ever with him, and ſee all things full of him!

— — The glitt'ring ſtars,
By the deep ear of meditation heard,

parate? This, ſure, cannot be ſuſpected, need not be feared. Much leſs need the true believer be apprehenſive of the failure of my kindneſs. An *univerſal* extinction of thoſe *ſtrongeſt* affections of nature, is a more ſuppoſeable caſe; than that I ſhould ever be unmindful of my people, or regardleſs of their intereſts.

* Pſal. lxxv. 2.

Still in their midnight watches ſing of HIM.
He nods a calm. The tempeſt blows his wrath.
The thunder is his voice; and the red flaſh
His ſpeedy ſword of juſtice. At his touch
The mountains flame. He ſhakes the ſolid earth,
And rocks the nations. Nor in theſe alone,
In *ev'ry common inſtance* GOD is ſeen.

THOMSON's *Spring*.

If the beautiful ſpangles, which a clear night pours on the beholder's eye: if thoſe other fires, which beam in remoter ſkies; and are diſcoverable only by, that revelation to the ſight, the teleſcope: if all thoſe *bright millions*, are ſo many fountains of day; enriched with native and independent luſtre; illuminating planets, and enlivening ſyſtems of their own*: what pomp, how majeſtic and ſplendid, is diſcloſed in the midnight ſcene! What *riches* are diſſeminated, through all thoſe numberleſs provinces of the great JEHOVAH's empire! Grandeur beyond expreſſion!—Yet, there is not the meaneſt ſlave, but carries *greater* wealth in his own boſom, poſſeſſes *ſuperior* dignity in his own perſon The *ſoul*, that informs his clay;—the ſoul, that teaches him to think, and enables him to chooſe; that qualifies him to reliſh rational pleaſure, and to breathe ſublime deſire†;—the ſoul that is endowed with ſuch noble faculties; and, above all, is diſtinguiſhed with the *dreadful*, the *glorious* capacity, of being pained or bleſſed, for ever—this ſoul ſurpaſſes in worth, whatever the eye can ſee; what-

* Conſult with reaſon, reaſon will reply,
Each *lucid point*, which glows in yonder ſky,
Informs a *ſyſtem* in the boundleſs ſpace,
And fills, with glory, it's appointed place:
With beams unborrow'd, brightens other ſkies,
And worlds, to thee unknown, with heat and life ſupplies.

The Univerſe.

† In *this* reſpect, as veſted with ſuch capacities, the ſoul even of fallen men, has an unqueſtionable greatneſs and dignity; is *majeſtic though in ruin*.

whatever, of material, the fancy can imagine. Before one ſuch intellectual being, all the treaſure, and all the magnificence of unintelligent creation, becomes poor and contemptible *. For this ſoul, omnipotence itſelf has waked, and worked, through every age. To *convince* this ſoul, the fundamental laws of nature have been controuled; and the moſt amazing miracles, have alarmed all the ends of the earth. To *inſtruct* this ſoul, the wiſdom of heaven has been transfuſed into the ſacred page; and miſſionaries have been ſent from the great King, who reſides in light unapproachable. To *ſanctify* this ſoul, the Almighty Comforter takes the wings of a dove; and, with a ſweet transforming influence, broods on the human heart. And O! to *redeem* this ſoul from guilt; to reſcue it from hell; the heaven of heavens was bowed, and GOD himſelf came down to dwell in duſt.

Let me pauſe, a while, upon this important ſubject.—What are the ſchemes, which engage the attention of eminent ſtateſmen, and mighty monarchs, compared with the grand intereſts of an immortal ſoul? The ſupport of commerce, and the ſucceſs of armies, though extremely weighty affairs; yet, if laid in the balance againſt the ſalvation of a ſoul, are lighter than the downy feather, poiſed againſt talents of gold. To ſave a navy from *ſhipwreck*, or a kingdom from *ſlavery*, are deliverances of the moſt momentous nature, which the tranſactions of mortality can admit. But O! how they

* I beg leave to tranſcribe a pertinent paſſage, from that celebrated maſter of reaſon, and univerſal literature, Dr. *Bentley*; whom no one can be tempted to ſuſpect, either tinctured with enthuſiaſm, or warped to bigotry.—"If we conſider, ſays he, the dignity of an intelligent being, and put that in the ſcale againſt brute and inanimate matter, we may affirm, without overvaluing human nature, that the ſoul of one virtuous and religious man is of greater worth and excellency, than the ſun, and his planets, and all the ſtars in the world."

See his Sermons at *Boyle*'s Lect. No. 8.

they ſhrink into an inconſiderable trifle, if (their aſpect upon immortality forgot) they are ſet in competition with the delivery of a ſingle ſoul, from the anguiſh and horrors of a *diſtreſſed eternity* * !

Is ſuch the importance of the ſoul! What vigilance then can be *too much*; or rather what holy ſolicitude can be *ſufficient*; for the overſeers of the Saviour's flock, and the guardians of this great, this venerable, this invaluable charge?—Since, ſuch is the importance of the ſoul; wilt thou not, O man, be watchful for the preſervation of thy own? Shall every caſual incident, awaken thy concern; every tranſitory toy, command thy regard? And ſhall the welfare of thy ſoul, a work of continual occurrence; a work of endleſs conſequence; ſue, in vain, for thy ſerious care?—Thy ſoul, thy ſoul, is thy all. If this be *ſecured*, thou art greatly rich, and wilt be unſpeakably happy. If this be *loſt*, a whole world acquired, will leave thee in poverty; and all it's delights enjoyed, will abandon thee to miſery.

I have often been charmed, and awed, at the ſight of the nocturnal heavens; even before I knew how to conſider them, in their proper circumſtances of majeſty and beauty. *Something*, like *magic*, has ſtruck my mind, on a tranſient and unthinking ſurvey of the æthereal vault; tinged throughout with the pureſt azure, and decorated with innumerable ſtarry lamps. I have felt, I know not what, powerful and aggrandizing impulſe; which ſeemed to ſnatch me from the low intanglements of vanity, and prompted an ardent ſigh for *ſublimer objects*. Methought, I heard, even from the ſilent ſpheres, a commanding call, to ſpurn the abject earth, and pant after unſeen delights.—Henceforward, I hope to

* Not all yon luminaries quench'd at once
Were half ſo ſad, as one benighted mind,
Which gropes for happineſs, and meets deſpair.
Night Thoughts, No. IX.

to imbibe more copiouſly, this *moral emanation* of the ſkies; when, in ſome ſuch manner as the preceding, they are rationally ſeen, and the ſight is duly improved. The ſtars, I truſt, will *teach* as well as *ſhine*; and help to diſpel, both nature's gloom, and my intellectual darkneſs. To ſome people, they diſcharge no better a ſervice, than that of holding a flambeau to their feet, and ſoftening the horrors of their night. To me and my friends, may they act as miniſters of a ſuperior order; as counſellors of wiſdom, and guides to happineſs! Nor will they fail to execute this nobler office, if they gently light our way, into the knowledge of their adored Maker; if they point out with their ſilver rays, our path to his beatific preſence.

I gaze, I ponder. I ponder, I gaze; and think ineffable things.—I roll an eye of awe and admiration. Again and again I repeat my raviſhed views; and can never ſatiate either my curioſity, or my inquiry. I ſpring my thoughts into this immenſe field, till even fancy tires upon her wing. I find wonders, *ever new*; wonders, more and *more amazing*.—Yet, after all my preſent inquiries, what a mere *nothing* do I know; by all my future ſearches, how *little* ſhall I be able to learn; of thoſe vaſtly diſtant ſuns, and their circling retinue of worlds! Could I pry with *Newton*'s piercing ſagacity, or launch into his extenſive ſurveys: even then, my apprehenſions would be little better, than thoſe dim and ſcanty images, which the *mole*, juſt emerged from her cavern, receives on her feeble optic.—This, ſure, ſhould repreſs all impatient or immoderate ardor to pry into the ſecrets of the ſtarry ſtructures; and make me more particularly careful, to cultivate my heart. To fathom the depths of the divine eſſence; or to ſcan univerſal nature, with a critical exactneſs; is an attempt, which ſets the *acuteſt philoſopher*, very nearly on a level with *the idiot*. Since it is almoſt, if not altogether, as impracticable by the former, as by the latter.

Be

Be it, then, my chief ſtudy, not to purſue, what is abſolutely unattainable; but rather to ſeek, what is obvious to find; eaſy to be acquired; and of ineſtimable advantage, when poſſeſſed. O! let me ſeek *that charity*, which edifieth*; *that faith*, which purifieth. Love, humble love, not conceited ſcience, keeps the door of heaven. Faith, a child-like faith in JESUS; not the haughty ſelf-ſufficient ſpirit, which ſcorns to be ignorant of any thing; preſents a key † to thoſe abodes of bliſs. —This preſent ſtate, is the ſcene deſtined to the *exerciſe* of *devotion*; the inviſible world, is the place appointed for the *enjoyment* of *knowledge*. There, the dawn of our infantile minds, will be advanced to the maturity of perfect day; or rather, there our midnight ſhades, will be brightened into all the luſtre of noon. There, the ſouls which come from the ſchool of faith, and bring with them the principles of love, will dwell in light itſelf; will be obſcured with no darkneſs at all; will know, even as they are known ‡.—Such an acquaintance, therefore, do I deſire to form, and to carry on ſuch a correſpondence, with the heavenly bodies; as may ſhed a benign influence on the ſeeds of grace, implanted in my breaſt. Let the exalted tracts of the firmament,

* 1 *Cor.* viii. 1. I need not inform my reader, that in this text; in that admirable chapter, 1 *Cor.* xiii. and in various other paſſages of Scripture; the word *charity* ſhould by no means be confined to the peculiar act of *alms-giving*, or external beneficence. It is of a much more exalted and extenſive nature. It ſignifies that divinely precious grace, which warms the ſoul with *ſupreme love* to GOD, and enlarges it with *diſintereſted affection* for men. Which renders it the reigning care of the life, and chief delight of the heart, to promote the happineſs of the one, and the glory of the other.—*This*, *this*, is that charity, of which ſo many excellent things are every where ſpoken. Which can never be too highly extolled, or too earneſtly coveted, ſince it is the image of GOD, and the very ſpirit of heaven.

† The Righteouſneſs of CHRIST. This is what *Milton* beautifully ſtiles;

— — The golden key,
That opes the palace of eternity.

‡ 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

mament, ſink my ſoul into *deep humiliation*. Let thoſe eternal fires, kindle in my heart an *adoring gratitude*, to their almighty Sovereign. Let yonder ponderous and enormous globes, which reſt on his ſupporting arm; teach me an *unſhaken affiance*, in their incarnate Maker. Then ſhall I be—if not wiſe as the aſtronomical adept, yet WISE UNTO SALVATION.

Having now walked and worſhipped, in this *univerſal temple*, that is arched with ſkies; emblazed with ſtars; and extended even to immenſity—Having caſt an eye, like the enraptured patriarch *; an eye of *reaſon* and *devotion*, through the magnificent ſcene. With the former, having diſcovered an infinitude of worlds; and with the latter, having met the Deity in every view—Having beheld, as *Moſes* in the flaming buſh, a *glimpſe*, of JEHOVAH'S excellencies! reflected from the ſeveral planets, and ſtreaming from myriads of celeſtial luminaries—Having read various leſſons, in that ſtupendous *book* of *wiſdom* †, where unmeaſurable ſheets of azure compoſe the page; and orbs of radiance write, in everlaſting characters, a *comment* on our creed—What remains, but that I cloſe the midnight ſolemnity, as our LORD concluded his grand ſacramental inſtitution, with a *ſong* of *praiſe*?—And behold a hymn, ſuited to the ſublime occaſion; indited by ‡ inſpiration itſelf; tranſferred into our language, by § one of the happieſt efforts of human ingenuity.

The ſpacious firmament on high,
With all the blue æthereal ſky,
And ſpangled heavens, a ſhining frame,
Their great original proclaim:

Th'

* Gen. xv. 5.

† —— —— For heaven
Is as the *book* of GOD before thee ſet,
Wherein to read his wond'rous works.——MILT.

‡ Pſal. xix. § ADDISON, *Spect.*, Vol. VI. No. 465.

Th' unweary'd ſun from day to day,
Does his Creator's pow'r diſplay;
And publiſhes, to ev'ry land,
The work of an Almighty Hand.

Soon as the ev'ning ſhades prevail,
The moon takes up the wond'rous tale;
And nightly to the liſt'ning earth,
Repeats the ſtory of her birth:
While all the ſtars, that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And ſpread the truth from pole to pole.

What though, in ſolemn ſilence, all
Move round the dark terreſtrial ball?
What though, no real voice nor ſound
Amid their radiant orbs be found?
In reaſon's ear they all rejoice,
And utter forth a glorious voice,
For ever ſinging as they ſhine,
The hand that made us, is divine.

A WIN-

A

WINTER-PIECE.

'TIS true, in the delightful ſeaſons, HIS tenderneſs and HIS love, are moſt eminently diſplayed.——In the *vernal* months, all is beauty to the eye, and muſic to the ear. The clouds drop fatneſs; the air ſoftens into balm; and flowers, in rich abundance, ſpring where-ever we tread, bloom where-ever we look.—Amidſt the burning heats of *ſummer*, HE expands the leaves, and thickens the ſhades. He ſpreads the cooling arbor, to receive us; and awakes the gentle breeze, to fan us. The moſs ſwells into a couch, for the repoſe of our bodies; while the rivulet ſoftly rolls, and ſweetly murmurs, to ſooth our imagination.—In *autumn*, HIS bounty covers the fields, with a profuſion of nutrimental treaſure; and bends the boughs, with loads of delicious fruit. He furniſhes his hoſpitable board with preſent plenty, and prepares a copious magazine for future wants.—But, is it *only* in theſe ſmiling periods of the year, that GOD, the all-gracious GOD, is ſeen? Has *winter*, ſtern winter, no tokens of his preſence? Yes; all things are eloquent of his praiſe. "His way is in the whirlwind." Storms and tempeſts fulfil his word, and extol his power.

Even piercing froſts bear witneſs to his goodneſs; while they bid the ſhivering nations, tremble at his wrath.—Be winter then, for a while, our theme*. Perhaps, thoſe *barren* ſcenes, may be *fruitful* of intellectual improvement. Perhaps, that rigorous cold, which binds the earth in icy chains; may ſerve to inlarge our hearts, and warm them with holy love.

See! how the *day* is *ſhortened!*—The ſun, detained in fairer climes, or engaged in more agreeable ſervices, riſes, like an unwilling viſitant, with tardy and reluctant ſteps. He walks, with a ſhy indifference, along the edges of the ſouthern ſky; caſting an oblique glance, he juſt looks upon our dejected world; and ſcarcely ſcatters light through the thick air. Dim is his appearance, languid are his gleams, while he continues. Or, if he chance to wear a brighter aſpect, and a cloudleſs brow; yet, like the young and gay in the houſe of mourning, he ſeems uneaſy, till he is gone; is in haſte to depart.—And let him depart. Why ſhould we wiſh for his longer ſtay; ſince he can ſhew us nothing, but the creation in diſtreſs? The flowery families lie dead, and the tuneful tribes are ſtruck dumb. The trees, ſtript of their verdure, and laſhed by ſtorms, ſpread their naked arms to the enraged and relentleſs heavens. Fragrance no longer floats in the air; but chilling damps hover, or cutting gales blow. Nature, diveſted of all her beautiful robes, ſits, like a forlorn diſconſolate widow, in her weeds. While winds, in doleful

* A ſketch of this nature, I muſt acknowledge, is quite different from the ſubject of the book; and, I cannot but declare, was as far diſtant from the thoughts of the Author. But, the deſire of *ſeveral* acquaintance, together with an intimation of it's uſefulneſs, by a very *polite letter* from an *unknown* hand, prevailed with me to add a few deſcriptive touches, and improving hints, on what is ſo often experienced in theſe northern regions. I hope, the attempt I have made to oblige theſe Gentlemen, will obtain the *approbation*, or at leaſt the *excuſe*, of my other readers.

doleful accents, howl; and rains, in repeated ſhowers, weep.

We regret not, therefore, the ſpeedy departure of the day. When the room is hung with *funeral black*, and diſmal objects are all around; who would deſire to have the *glimmering taper* kept alive? Which can only diſcover ſpectacles of ſorrow; can only make the horror viſible.—And, ſince this mortal life is little better than a continual conflict with ſin, or an unremitted ſtruggle with miſery; is it not a *gracious* ordination, which has reduced our age to a *ſpan*? Fourſcore years of trial, for the virtuous, are ſufficiently long; and more than ſuch a term, allowed to the wicked, would render them beyond all meaſure vile. Our way to the kingdom of heaven lies through tribulations. Shall we then *accuſe*, ſhall we not rather *bleſs* the providence, which has made the paſſage ſhort? Soon, ſoon we croſs the vale of tears; and then arrive on the happy hills, where light for ever ſhines, where joy for ever ſmiles.

Sometimes, the day is rendered ſhorter ſtill; is almoſt blotted out from the year *. The vapours gather; they thicken into an impenetrable gloom; and obſcure the face of the ſky. At length, the *rains* deſcend. The ſluices of the firmament are opened: and the low-hung clouds pour their congregated ſtores. Copious and unintermitted, ſtill they pour; and ſtill are unexhauſted. The waters drop inceſſantly from the eaves, and ruſh in rapid ſtreams from the ſpouts. They roar along the channelled pavements, and ſtand in foul ſhallows amidſt the village-ſtreets. Now, if the inattentive eye, or negligent hand, has left the roof but ſcantily covered; the inſinuating element finds it's way into every flaw, and oozing through the cieling, at once upbraids and chaſtiſes the careleſs inhabitant. The

* Involvere Diem Nimbi & *Nox humida* Cœlum
Abſtulit— VIRG.

ploughman, ſoaked to the ſkin, leaves his half-tilled acre. The poor poultry, dripping with wet, croud into ſhelter. The tenants of the bough fold up their wings, afraid to launch into the ſtreaming air. The beaſts, joyleſs and diſpirited, ruminate under their ſheds. The roads ſwim, and the brooks ſwell.—The *river*, amidſt all this watry ferment, long contained itſelf within it's appointed bounds. But, ſwollen by innumerable currents; and rouſed, at laſt, into uncontroulable rage; burſts over it's banks; ſhoots into the plain; bears down all oppoſition; ſpreads itſelf far and wide; and buries the meadow under a brown, ſluggiſh, ſoaking *deluge*.

How happy for man, that this inundation comes, when there are no flowery crops in the valley, to be overwhelmed; no fields ſtanding thick with corn, to be laid waſte! At *ſuch* a juncture, it would have been *ruin* to the huſbandman and his family: but, *thus* timed, it yields *manure* for his ground, and promiſes him *riches* in reverſion.—How often, and how long, has the divine Majeſty bore with the moſt injurious affronts from ſinners! His goodneſs triumphed over their perverſeneſs, and graciouſly refuſed to be exaſperated. But, O preſumptuous creatures, multiply no longer your provocations. Urge not, by repeated iniquities, the Almighty Arm to ſtrike; leſt his long-ſuffering ceaſe, and his fierce anger break forth; break forth, like a *flood of waters* *, and ſweep you away, into irrecoverable and everlaſting perdition.

How mighty! how majeſtic! and O! how myſterious are thy works, thou GOD of heaven, and LORD of nature! When the air is calm, where ſleep the *ſtormy winds?* In what chambers are they repoſed, or in what dungeons confined! till thou art pleaſed to awaken their rage, and throw open their priſon-doors. Then, with irreſiſtible impetuoſity they fly forth, ſcattering dread, and menacing deſtruction.

The

* Hoſ. v. 10.

The atmoſphere is hurled into the moſt tumultuous confuſion. The æreal torrent burſts it's way over mountains, ſeas, and continents. All things feel the dreadful ſhock. All things tremble before the furious blaſt. The *foreſt*, vexed and tore, groans under the ſcourge. Her ſturdy ſons are ſtrained to the very root, and almoſt ſweep the ſoil, they were wont to ſhade. The ſtubborn oak, that diſdains to bend, is daſhed headlong to the ground; and with ſhattered arms, with proſtrate trunk, blocks the road.—While the flexile reed, that ſprings up in the marſh, yielding to the guſt (as the *meek* and pliant temper, to injuries; or the *reſigned* and patient ſpirit, to misfortunes;) eludes the force of the ſtorm, and ſurvives amidſt the wide-ſpread havock.

For a moment, the turbulent and outrageous ſky, ſeems to be aſſwaged; but, it intermits it's wrath, only to increaſe it's ſtrength. Soon the ſounding ſquadrons of the air return to the attack, and renew their ravages with redoubled fury. The ſtately dome rocks, amidſt the wheeling clouds. The impregnable tower totters on it's baſis; and threatens to overwhelm whom it was intended to protect. The ragged rock is rent in pieces *; and even the hills, the perpetual hills, on their deep foundations are ſcarcely ſecure.—Where, now, is the place of ſafety? When the *city* reels, and houſes become heaps! Sleep affrighted flies. Diverſion is turned into horror. All is uproar in the element; all is conſternation among mortals: and nothing, but one wide ſcene of rueful devaſtation, through the land.—Yet, this is only an *inferior* miniſter of divine diſpleaſure. The executioner of *milder* indignation. How then,—O! *how will the lofty looks of man be humbled, and the haughtineſs of men be bowed*

* 1 Kings xix. 11.

down *; when the LORD GOD omnipotent ſhall *meditate terror*—when he ſhall ſet all his terrors in array—when he ariſes to judge the nations, and to *ſhake terribly* the earth!

The *ocean* ſwells with tremendous commotions. The ponderous waves are heaved from their capacious bed, and almoſt lay bare the unfathomable deep. Flung into the moſt rapid agitation, they ſweep over the rocks; they laſh the lofty cliffs; and toſs themſelves into the clouds. Navies are rent from their anchors; and, with all their enormous load, are whirled, ſwift as the arrow, wild as the winds, along the vaſt abyſs.—Now, they climb the rolling mountain; they plough the frightful ridge, and ſeem to ſkim the ſkies. Anon, they plunge into the opening gulf; they loſe the ſight of day; and are loſt themſelves to every eye. How vain is the pilot's art! How impotent the mariner's ſtrength! They reel to and fro, and ſtagger in the jarring hold; or cling to the cordage, while burſting ſeas foam over the deck. *Deſpair* is in every face, and *death* ſits threatening on every ſurge.—But why, O ye aſtoniſhed mariners, why ſhould you abandon yourſelves to deſpair? Is the LORD's hand *ſhortened*, becauſe the waves of the ſea rage horribly? Is his ear *deafened*, by the roaring thunders, and the bellowing tempeſt? Cry, cry unto HIM, who "holdeth the winds in his fiſt, "and

* —— *Mortalia corda*
Per gentes humilis ſtravit pavor.—

One would almoſt imagine, that *Virgil* had read *Iſaiah*, and borrowed his ideas from chap. ii. ver. 11. The *humilis* and *ſtravit* of the one, ſo exactly correſpond with the—*humbled*—*bowed down*—of the other. But, in one circumſtance, the prophet is very much ſuperior to the poet. The prophet, by giving a ſtriking *contraſt* to his ſentiments, repreſents them with incomparably greater energy. He ſays not, *men* in the groſs, or the *human heart* in general: but men of the moſt *elated* looks; hearts big with the moſt *arrogant* imaginations. Even *theſe* ſhall ſtoop from their ſupercilious heights; even *theſe* ſhall grovel in the duſt of abaſement, and ſhudder with all the extremes of an abject puſillanimity.

"and the waters in the hollow of his hand." HE is all-gracious, to hear; and almighty, to ſave. If HE command, the ſtorm ſhall be huſhed to ſilence: the billows ſhall ſubſide into a calm: the lightnings ſhall lay their fiery bolts aſide: and, inſtead of ſinking in a watry grave, you ſhall find yourſelves brought to the deſired haven.

Sometimes, after a joyleſs day, a more diſmal night ſucceeds. ——The lazy, louring vapours had wove ſo thick a veil, as the meridian ſun could ſcarcely penetrate. What gloom then muſt overwhelm the nocturnal hours! the moon withdraws her ſhining. Not a ſingle ſtar, is able to ſtruggle through the deep arrangement of ſhades. All is *pitchy darkneſs*, without one enlivening ray. How ſolemn! how awful! 'Tis like the ſhroud of nature, or the return of chaos. I don't wonder that it is the parent of terrors, and ſo apt to ingender melancholy.—Lately, the tempeſt marked it's rapid way with *miſchief*; now, the night dreſſes her ſilent pavilion with *horror*.

I have *ſometimes* left the beaming tapers, withdrawn from the ruddy fire, and plunged into the thickeſt of theſe ſooty ſhades: without regretting the change, rather exulting in it as a welcome deliverance. The very gloom was pleaſing, was exhilarating, compared with the converſation, I quitted. The ſpeech of my companions (how does it grieve me, that I ſhould even *once* have occaſion to call them by *that* name!) was the language of darkneſs: was horror to the ſoul, and torture to the ear.—*Their teeth were ſpears and arrows, and their tongue a ſharp ſword*, to ſtab and aſſaſſinate, their neighbour's character. *Their throat was an open ſepulchre*, gaping to devour the reputation of the innocent, or tainting the air with their virulent and polluted breath.—Sometimes, their licentious and ungovernable diſcourſe, ſhot arrows of *profaneneſs* againſt heaven itſelf; and, in proud defiance, challenged the reſentment

ment of omnipotence.—Sometimes, as if it was the glory of human nature, to cheriſh the *groſſeſt* appetites of the brute; or the mark of a gentleman, to have ſerved an apprenticeſhip in a brothel; the filthieſt jeſts of the ſtews (if low *obſcenity* can be a jeſt) were nauſeouſly obtruded on the company. All the *modeſt* part were offended and grieved; while the other beſotted creatures laughed aloud, though the leproſy of uncleanneſs appeared on their lips.—Are not theſe perſons *priſoners* of *darkneſs*; though blazing ſconces, pour artificial day, through their rooms? Are not their ſouls immured in the moſt baleful ſhades; though the noon-tide ſun is brightened, by flaming on their gilded chariots?—They diſcern not that great and adorable Being, who fills the univerſe with his infinite and glorious preſence; who is *all eye*, to obſerve their actions; *all ear*, to examine their words. They know not the all-ſufficient Redeemer, nor the unſpeakable bleſſedneſs of his heavenly kingdom. They are groping for the prize of happineſs; but will certainly graſp the thorn of anxiety. They are wantonly ſporting on the brink of a precipice; and are every moment in danger of falling headlong, into *irretrievable* ruin, and *endleſs* deſpair.

They have forced me out, and are, perhaps, deriding me in my abſence: are charging my reverence for the ever-preſent GOD, and my concern for the dignity of our *rational* nature, to the account of humour and ſingularity; to narrowneſs of thought, or ſourneſs of temper.—Be it ſo.—I will indulge no indignation againſt them. If any thing like it *ſhould* ariſe, I will convert it into prayer—"Pity them, O thou Fa-
"ther of mercies!—Shew them the madneſs of their
"profaneneſs!—Shew them the baſeneſs of their vile
"ribaldry!—Let their diſſolute rant be turned into
"ſilent ſorrow and confuſion. Till they open their
"lips, to adore thine *inſulted* majeſty, and to implore
"thy

" thy gracious pardon. Till they devote to thy ſervice, " thoſe ſocial hours, and thoſe ſuperior faculties, " which they are now abuſing—to the diſhonour of thy " name—to the contamination of their own ſouls—and " (unleſs timely repentance intervene) to their ever- " laſting infamy and perdition."

I ride home amidſt the gloomy void. All darkling and ſolitary, I can ſcarce diſcern my horſe's head; and only gueſs out my blind road. *No companion*, but danger; or, perhaps " deſtruction ready at my ſide *." —But, why do I fancy myſelf *ſolitary?* Is not the Father of lights; the GOD of my life; the great and everlaſting friend; always at my right-hand? Becauſe the day is excluded, is his omnipreſence vacated? Though I have no earthly acquaintance near, to aſſiſt in caſe of a misfortune; or to beguile the time, and divert uneaſy ſuſpicions, by entertaining conferences; may I not lay my help upon the Almighty, and converſe with GOD by humble ſupplication? For this exerciſe, no place is improper; no hour unſeaſonable; and no poſture incommodious. This is *ſociety*, the beſt of ſociety, even in ſolitude. This is a fund of delights, eaſily portable, and quite inexhauſtible. A *treaſure* this, of unknown value; liable to no hazard, from wrong or robbery; but perfectly ſecure, to the lonely wanderer, in the moſt darkſome paths.

And why ſhould I diſtreſs myſelf with apprehenſions of *peril?* This acceſs to GOD, is not only an indefeaſible privilege, but a kind of *ambulatory garriſon*. Thoſe, who make known their requeſt unto GOD, and rely upon his protecting care; he gives *his Angels* charge over their welfare. His Angels are commiſſioned, to eſcort them in their travelling; and to hold up their goings, that they daſh not their foot againſt a ſtone †. Nay, *he himſelf* condeſcends to be their guardian, and " keeps

* Job xviii. 12. † Pſal. xci. 11, 12.

"keeps all their bones, ſo that not one of them is "broken."—Between theſe perſons, and the moſt miſchievous objects, a treaty of peace is concluded. The articles of this grand alliance, are recorded in the book of Revelation; and will, when it is for the real benefit of believers, aſſuredly be made good, in the adminiſtrations of providence. *In that day*, ſaith the LORD, *will I make a covenant for them with the beaſts of the field, and with the fowls of heaven, and with the creeping things of the ground*; and they *ſhall be in league with the ſtones of the field**. Though they fall headlong on the flints; even the flints, fitted to fracture the ſkull, ſhall receive them as into the arms of friendſhip; and not offer to hurt, whom the LORD is pleaſed to preſerve.

May I then enjoy the preſence of this gracious GOD, and darkneſs and light ſhall be both alike. Let HIM whiſper peace to my conſcience; and this dread ſilence ſhall be more charming, than the voice of eloquence, or the ſtrains of muſic. Let HIM reveal his raviſhing perfections in my ſoul; and I ſhall not want the ſaffron beauties of the morn, the golden glories of noon, or the impurpled evening ſky. I ſhall ſigh only for thoſe moſt deſirable and diſtinguiſhed realms; where the light of HIS countenance *perpetually* ſhines, and conſequently—"there is † no night there."

How ſurpriſing are the alterations of nature! I left her, the preceding evening, plain and unadorned. But, now, a *thick rime* has ſhed it's hoary honours over all. It has ſhagged the fleeces of the ſheep, and criſped the traveller's locks. The hedges are richly fringed, and all the ground is profuſely powdered. The downward branches are taſſeled with ſilver, and the upright are feathered with the plumy wave.

The

* Job. v. 23. Hoſ. ii. 18. † Rev. xxi. 25.

The *fine*, are not always the *valuable*. The air, amidſt all theſe gaudy decorations, is charged with chilling and *unwholſome* damps. The raw hazy influence ſpreads wide; ſits deep; hangs heavy and oppreſſive on the ſprings of life. A liſtleſs langour clogs the animal functions; and the purple ſtream glides but faintly through it's channels. In vain, the ruler of the day exerts his beaming powers: in vain, he attempts to diſperſe this inſurrection of vapours. The ſullen, malignant cloud refuſes to depart. It envelops the world, and *intercepts* the *proſpect*. I look abroad for the neighbouring village; I ſend my eye in queſt of the riſing turret; but am ſcarce able to diſcern the very next houſe. Where are the blue arches of heaven? Where is the radiant countenance of the ſun? Where the boundleſs ſcenes of creation? Loſt, loſt are their beauties; quenched their glories. The thronged theatre of the univerſe, ſeems an empty void; and all it's elegant pictures, an undiſtinguiſhed blank.—Thus would it have been with our intellectual views, if the *goſpel* had not come in to our relief. We ſhould have known, neither our true good, nor real evil. We had been a riddle to ourſelves; the preſent ſtate all confuſion, and the future impenetrable darkneſs. But, the Sun of righteouſneſs, ariſing with potent and triumphant beams, has diſſipated the interpoſing cloud. Has opened a proſpect, more beautiful, than the bloſſoms of ſpring; more chearing, than the treaſures of autumn; and far more enlarged, than the extent of the viſible ſyſtem. Which, having led the eye of the mind, through fields of grace, over rivers of righteouſneſs, and hills crowned with knowledge; terminates, at length, in the heavens; ſweetly loſing itſelf, in regions of infinite bliſs, and endleſs glory.

As I walk along the fog, it ſeems, at ſome little diſtance, to be almoſt ſolid gloom; ſuch as would ſhut out every glimpſe of light, and totally impriſon me in obſcurity.

ſcurity. But, when I approach, and enter it; I find myſelf agreeably miſtaken, and the miſt much *thinner*, than it *appeared*.—Such is the caſe, with regard to the ſufferings of the preſent life; they are not, when experienced, ſo dreadful as a timorous imagination ſurmiſed. Such alſo is the caſe, with reference to the *gratifications* of *ſenſe*; they prove not, when enjoyed, ſo ſubſtantial, as a ſanguine expectation repreſented. In both inſtances, we are graciouſly diſappointed. The keen edge of the calamity is blunted, that it may not wound us with incurable anguiſh: the exquiſite reliſh of the proſperity is palled, that it may not captivate our affections, and enſlave them to inferior delights.

Sometimes, the face of things wears a more pleaſing form; the very reverſe of the foregoing. The ſober evening advances, to cloſe the ſhort-lived day. The firmament, clear and unſullied, puts on it's brighteſt blue. The ſtars, in thronging multitudes, and with a peculiar brilliancy, glitter through the fair expanſe. While the *froſt* pours it's ſubtle and penetrating influence, all around. Sharp and intenſely ſevere, all the long night, the rigid æther continues it's operations. When, late and ſlow, the morning opens her pale eye; in what a curious and amuſing diſguiſe, is nature dreſſed! The icicles, jagged and uneven, are pendent on the houſes. A whitiſh film incruſts the windows, where mimic landſcapes riſe, and fanſied figures ſwell. The fruitful fields are hardened to iron; the moiſtened meadows are congealed to marble; and both reſound (an effect unknown before) with the peaſant's haſty tread. The ſtream is arreſted in it's career, and it's ever-flowing ſurface chained to the banks. The fluid paths become a ſolid road; where the finny ſhoals were wont to rove, the ſportive youth ſlide, or the rattling chariots roll *. And (what would ſeem, to an inhabitant of

* *Undaque jam tergo ferratos ſuſtinet orbes*
Puppibus illa prius patulis, nunc hoſpita plauſtris.
Æraque diſſiliunt vulgo. VIRG.

of the ſouthern world, as unaccountable as the deepeſt myſteries of our religion) that very ſame breath of heaven, which *cements* the lakes into a cryſtal pavement; *cleaves* the oaks, as it were with inviſible wedges, "*breaks* "in pieces the northern iron and the ſteel;" even while it *builds* a bridge of icy rock, over the ſeas*.

The air is all ſerenity. Refined by the nitrous particles, it affords the moſt diſtinct views, and extenſive proſpects. The ſeeds of *infection* are killed; and the *peſtilence* deſtroyed, even in embryo. So, the cold of *affliction* tends to mortify our corruptions, and ſubdue our vicious habits.—The crouding atmoſphere conſtringes our bodies, and braces our nerves. The ſpirits are buoyant, and ſally briſkly on the execution of their office. In the ſummer-months, ſuch an unclouded ſky, and ſo bright a ſun, would have melted us with heat, and ſoftened us into ſupineneſs. We ſhould have been ready to throw our limbs under the ſpreading beech, and to lie at eaſe by the murmuring brook. But, now, none loiters in his path; none is ſeen with folded arms. All is in motion; all is activity. Choice, prompted by the weather, ſupplies the ſpur of neceſſity. Thus, the *rugged* ſchool of misfortune, often trains up the mind, to a vigorous exertion of it's faculties. The *bleak* climate of *adverſity*, often inſpirits us with a manly reſolution. When a ſoft and downy affluence, perhaps, would have relaxed all the generous ſpring of the ſoul; and have left it enervated with pleaſure, or diſſolved in indolence.

"*Cold* cometh out of the North." The winds, having ſwept thoſe deſarts of ſnow, arm themſelves with millions of frozen particles, and make a fierce deſcent upon our iſle. Under black and ſcowling clouds, they

* *Job* xxxviii. 30. *The waters are hid*, locked up from the cattle's lips, and ſecured from the fiſher's net, *as* wells were wont to be cloſed *with a* ponderous and impenetrable *ſtone*. *And* not only lakes and rivers, but *the ſurface of the great deep*, with it's reſtleſs and uncontroulable ſurges, *is taken captive, ithlekadu*, by the froſt, and bound in ſhining fetters.

drive, dreadfully whizzing, through the darkened air. They growl around our houſes; aſſault our doors; and, eager for entrance, faſten on our windows. Walls can ſcarce reſtrain them, bars are unable to exclude them; through every cranny they force their way. Ice is on their wings; they ſcatter agues, through the land; and winter, all winter, rages as they go. Their breath is as a ſearing * iron to the little verdure, left in the plains. Vaſtly more pernicious to the tender plants, than the ſharpeſt knife; they kill their branches, and wound the very root. Let not the corn venture to peep too freely from the entrenchment of the furrow; let not the fruit-bearing bloſſoms dare to come abroad, from their lodgment in the bark; leſt theſe murderous blaſts intercept and ſeize the unwary ſtrangers, and deſtroy the hopes of the advancing year.

O, 'tis ſeverely cold! Who is ſo hardy, as not to ſhrink at this *exceſſively pinching* weather? See, every face is pale. Even the blooming cheeks contract a gelid hue; and the teeth hardly forbear chattering.—Ye that ſit eaſy and joyous, amidſt your commodious apartments, ſolacing yourſelves in the diffuſive warmth of your fire; be mindful of your brethren, in the chearleſs tenement of poverty. *Their* ſhattered panes are open to the piercing winds; a tattered garment ſcarcely covers their ſhivering fleſh; while a few faint and dying embers on the ſqualid hearth, rather mock their wiſhes, than warm their limbs.—While the generous juices of *Oporto*, ſparkle in your glaſſes; or the ſtreams beautifully tinged and deliciouſly flavoured with the *Chineſe* leaf, ſmoak in the elegant porcelain: O remember, that many of your fellow-creatures, amidſt

* This, I ſuppoſe, is the meaning of that figurative expreſſion, uſed by the prophet *Habakkuk*; who, ſpeaking of the *Chaldæans* invading *Judæa*, ſays—*Their faces*, or the incurſions they make, *ſhall ſup up*, ſhall ſwallow greedily, ſhall devour utterly, the inhabitants of the country, and their valuable effects; *as the* keen, corroding blaſts of the *Eaſt-wind*, deſtroy every green thing in the field, *Hab.* i. 9.

midſt all the rigour of theſe inclement ſkies, are emaciated with ſickneſs; benumbed with age; and pining with hunger. Let "their loins bleſs you," for comfortable cloathing. Reſtore them with medicine; regale them with food; and baffle the raging year. So, may you never know any of their diſtreſſes, but only by the hearing of the ear; the ſeeing of the eye; or the feeling of a tender commiſeration!—Methinks, the bitter bluſtering winds plead for the poor indigents. May they breathe pity into *your* breaſts; while they blow hardſhips into *their* huts!—Obſerve thoſe blue flames, and ruddy coals, in your chimney: quickened by the cold, they look more lively, and glow more ſtrongly. Silent, but ſeaſonable admonition to the gay circle, that chat and ſmile around them! *Thus* may your hearts, at ſuch a juncture of need, kindle into a peculiar benevolence! Detain not your ſuperfluous piles of wood. Let them haſten to the relief of the ſtarving family. Bid them expire in many a willing blaze, to mitigate the ſeverity of the ſeaſon, and chear the bleak abodes of want. So ſhall they aſcend, mingled with thankſgivings to GOD, and ardent prayers for your welfare—aſcend, more grateful to heaven, than columns of the moſt coſtly incenſe.

Now the winds ceaſe. Having brought their load, they are diſmiſſed from ſervice. They have wafted an immenſe cargo of clouds, which empty themſelves in *ſnow*. At firſt, a few ſcattered ſhreads come wandering down the ſaddened ſky. This ſlight ſkirmiſh is ſucceeded by a general onſet. The flakes, large, and numerous, and thick-wavering, deſcend. They dim the air, and haſten the approach of night. Through all the night, in ſofteſt ſilence, and with a continual flow, this fleecy ſhower falls. In the morning, when we awake, what a ſurpriſing change appears!—Is this the ſame world? Here is no diverſity of colour; I can hardly diſtinguiſh the trees, from the hills on which they grow. Which are the meadows, and which the plains? Where are the

green paſtures, and where the fallow lands? All things lie blended in bright confuſion. So bright, that it heightens the ſplendor of day, and even dazzles the organs of ſight.—The lawn is not ſo fair, as this ſnowy mantle, which inveſts the fields; and even the lily, was the lily to appear, would look tarniſhed in it's preſence. I can think of but *one* thing, which *excels* or equals the glittering robe of winter. Is any perſon deſirous to know my meaning? he may find it explained in that admirable hymn *, compoſed by the royal penitent. Is any deſirous to poſſeſs this matchleſs ornament? He will find it offered to his acceptance, in every page of the goſpel.

See! (for the eye cannot ſatisfy itſelf, without viewing again and again the curious, the delicate ſcene) See! how the hedges are habited, like ſpotleſs veſtals! The houſes are roofed with uniformity and luſtre. The meadows are covered with a carpet of the fineſt ermine†. The groves bow, beneath the lovely burden: and all, all below, is one wide, immenſe, ſhining waſte of white.—By deep ſnows, and heavy rains, *GOD ſealeth up the hand of every man.* And for this purpoſe, adds our ſacred philoſopher, *that all men may know his work* ‡. He confines them within their doors, and puts a ſtop to their ſecular buſineſs: that they may conſider the things which belong to their ſpiritual welfare. That, having a vacation from their ordinary employ, they may obſerve the works of his power, and become acquainted with the myſteries of his grace.

And worthy, worthy of all obſervation, are the works of the great Creator. They are prodigiouſly various, and perfectly amazing. How pliant and ductile is nature, under

* Can any thing be whiter than ſnow? Yes, ſaith *David*; if GOD be pleaſed to waſh me from my ſins in the blood of CHRIST, *I ſhall be even whiter than ſnow.* Pſal. li. 7. See page 278, 279.

† This animal is milk-white. As for thoſe *black ſpots*, which we generally ſee, in linings of ermine, they are added by the furrier; in order to diverſify the appearance, or heighten the beauty, of the native colour.

‡ Job xxxvii. 7.

under his forming hand! At his command, the ſelf-ſame ſubſtance aſſumes the moſt different ſhapes; and is transformed into an endleſs multiplicity of figures. If HE ordains, the water is *moulded* into hail, and diſcharged upon the earth like a volley of ſhot; or, it is *conſolidated* into ice, and defends the rivers, "as it were "with a breaſt-plate." At the bare intimation of his will, the very ſame element is ſcattered in hoar-froſt, like a ſprinkling of the moſt *attenuated* aſhes; or, is ſpread over the ſurface of the ground, in theſe couches of ſwelling and *flaky* down.

The ſnow, however it may carry the appearance of cold, affords a *warm* garment for the corn; ſcreens it from nipping froſts, and cheriſhes it's infant growth. It will abide for a while, to exert a protecting care, and exerciſe a foſtering influence. Then, touched by the ſun, or thawed by a ſoftening gale; the furry veſture, melts into genial moiſture; ſinks deep into the ſoil, and ſaturates it's pores with the diſſolving nitre: repleniſhing the glebe with thoſe principles of vegetative life, which will open into the bloom of ſpring, and ripen into the fruits of autumn.—Beautiful emblem this, and comfortable repreſentation of the divine *word*; both in the ſucceſsful, and advantageous iſſue of it's operation! *As the rain cometh down, and the ſnow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give ſeed to the ſower, and bread to the eater: So ſhall my word be, that goeth forth out of my mouth: it ſhall not return unto me void, but ſhall accompliſh that which I pleaſe, and it ſhall proſper in the thing whereunto I ſent it**.

Nature, at length, puts off her lucid veil. She drops it, in a trickling *thaw*. The looſened ſnow, rolls in ſheets from the houſes. Various openings ſpot the hills; which, even while we look, become larger, and more numerous. The trees rid themſelves, by degrees, of the hoary incumbrance. Shook from the ſpringing

* Iſa. lv. 10, 11.

boughs, part falls heavy to the ground, part flies abroad in ſhining atoms. Our fields and gardens, lately buried beneath the drifted heaps, riſe plain and diſtinct to view.—Since we ſee nature once again, has ſhe no verdant traces, no beautiful features, left? They are, like real friends, very rare; and therefore the more particularly to be regarded, the more highly to be valued. —Here and there, the *holly* hangs out her glowing berries; the *lauruſtinus* ſpreads her graceful tufts; and both, under a covert of unfading foliage.—The plain, but hardy *ivy* clothes the decrepit, crazy wall; nor ſhrinks from the friendly office, though the ſkies frown, and the ſtorm roars.—The *laurel*, firm, erect, and bold, expands it's leaf of vivid green. In ſpite of the united, the repeated attacks of wind, and rain, and froſt, it preſerves an undiſmayed lively look; and maintains it's poſt, while withering millions fall around. Worthy, by vanquiſhing the rugged force of winter, worthy to adorn the triumphant conqueror's brow.—Nor muſt I forget the *bay-tree*; which ſcorns to be a mean penſioner, on a few tranſient ſunny gleams; or, with a ſervile obſequiouſneſs, to vary it's appearance, in conformity to the changing ſeaſons. By ſuch indications of ſterling worth, and ſtaunch reſolution, reading a lecture to the poet's genius; while it weaves the chaplet for his temples.—Theſe, and a few other plants, clad with native verdure, retain their comely aſpect, in the bleakeſt climes, and in the coldeſt months.

Such, and ſo durable, are the accompliſhments of a *refined* underſtanding, and an *amiable* temper. The tawdry ornaments of dreſs, which catch the unthinking vulgar, ſoon become inſipid and deſpicable. The rubied lip, and the roſy cheek fade. Even the ſparkling wit*, as well as the ſparkling eye, pleaſe but for a mo-

* "How little does GOD eſteem the things that men count "great; the endowments of *wit* and eloquence, that *men* admire in "ſome! Alas! how poor are they to him! He reſpecteth not any "who are wiſe in heart: they are nothing, and leſs than nothing, "in

a moment. But the virtuous mind has charms, which ſurvive the decay of every inferior embelliſhment. Charms, which add to the fragrancy of the flower, the *permanency* of the *ever-green*.

Such, likewiſe, is the happineſs of the ſincerely religious; like a tree, ſays the inſpired moraliſt, "whoſe "leaf ſhall not fall." He borrows not his peace from external circumſtances; but has a fund within, and is "ſatisfied from himſelf*." Even though impoveriſhed by calamitous accidents; he is rich in the *poſſeſſion* of *grace*, and richer in the *hope* of *glory*. His joys are infinitely ſuperior to, as well as nobly independent on, the tranſitory glow of ſenſual delight, or the capricious favours of, what the world calls, fortune.

If the ſnow compoſes the light-armed troops of the ſky; methinks, the *hail* conſtitutes it's heavy artillery †. When driven by a vehement wind, with what dreadful impetuoſity,

"in his eyes. Even *wiſe* men admire, how little it is that men "know; how ſmall a matter lies under the ſound of theſe popular "wonders, a learned man, a great ſcholar, a great ſtateſman. How "much more doth the all-wiſe GOD meanly account of theſe! He "often diſcovers, even to the world, their meanneſs. He *befools* "them. So valour, or birth, or worldly greatneſs, theſe he gives, "and gives as things he makes no great reckoning of, to ſuch as "ſhall never ſee his face; and calls to the inheritance of glory poor "deſpiſed creatures, that are looked on as the *off-ſcourings*, and *refuſe* "of the world."

—*THUS* ſays an excellent author; who writes with the moſt amiable ſpirit of benevolence; with the moſt unaffected air of humility; and like the ſacred originals, from which he copies, with a majeſtic ſimplicity of ſtile.—Whoſe *ſelect Works* I may venture to recommend, not only as a treaſure, but as a MINE of genuine, ſterling, evangelical piety.—See page 520, of Archbiſhop LEIGHTON's *Select Works*, the *Edinburgh* edition, octavo. Which it is neceſſary to ſpecify, becauſe the *London* edition does not contain that part of his writings, which has ſupplied me with the preceding *quotation*.

* Prov. xiv. 14.

† *He caſteth forth his ice like morſels.* Pſal. cxlvii. 17. Which, in modern language, might be thus expreſſed: *He poureth his hail like a volley of ſhot.* The word *pethim*, inadequately tranſlated *morſels*, alludes, I think, to thoſe *fragments* of the rock, or thoſe *ſmooth ſtones* from the brook, which, in the day of battle, the warriors hurled from their ſlings.

impetuoſity, does that ſtony ſhower fall! how it rebounds from the frozen ground, and rattles on the reſounding dome! It attenuates the rivers into ſmoke, or ſcourges them into foam. It cruſhes the infant flowers; cuts in pieces the gardener's early plants; and batters the feeble fortification of his glaſſes into ſhivers. It darts into the traveller's face: he turns, with haſte, from the ſtroke; or feels, on his cheek, for the guſhing blood. If he would retreat into the houſe, it follows him even thither; and, like a determined enemy, that puſhes the purſuit, daſhes through the crackling panes.—But, the fierce attack is quickly over. The clouds have ſoon ſpent their ſhafts; ſoon unſtrung their bow. Happy for the inhabitants of the earth, that a ſally ſo dreadfully *furious*, ſhould be ſo remarkably *ſhort!* What elſe could endure the ſhock, or eſcape deſtruction?

But, behold a *bow*, of no hoſtile intention! A bow, painted in variegated colours, on the diſburdened cloud. How vaſt is the extent, how delicate the texture, of that *ſhowery arch!* It compaſſeth the heavens, with a glorious circle; and teaches us to forget the horrors of the ſtorm. Elegant it's form, and rich it's tincture; but more delightful it's ſacred ſignificancy. While the violet and the roſe, bluſh in it's beautiful aſpect; the olive-branch ſmiles in it's gracious import. It writes, in radiant dyes, what the angels ſung in harmonious ſtrains; "Peace on earth, and good-will towards men." It is the ſtamp of *inſurance*, for the continuance of ſeed-time, and harveſt; for the preſervation and ſecurity of the viſible world *. It is the comfortable *token* †, of a better ſtate, and a happier kingdom—a kingdom, where ſin ſhall ceaſe, and miſery be aboliſhed; where ſtorms ſhall beat, and winter pierce no more; but holineſs, happineſs, and joy, like one unbounded *ſpring*, for ever, ever bloom.

31 MR 64

A TABLE

* Gen. ix. 12—16. † Rev. iv. 3.

A TABLE OF THE TEXTS

MORE OR LESS ILLUSTRATED IN THIS WORK.

N. B. As Dr. SHAW, in the Supplement to his *excellent* Book of Travels, and ſeveral other Authors of the *greateſt* Eminence, have given an Index of Scriptures, occaſionally explained in their Writings; I doubt not, but I ſhall oblige *many* of my Readers, by what I *here* ſubjoin; thoſe eſpecially, whoſe Taſte is happily formed to reliſh the Beauties of the ſacred Records.

	chap.	*ver.*	*page*
Gen.	30.	1.	25
Deut.	32.	2, 9.	7
Joſh.	10.	12, 13.	323
Judg.	5.	20.	ibid.
	5.	30.	101
1 Sam.	28.	19.	53
1 Kin.	8.	27.	4
	20.	40.	207
Neh.	9.	6.	327
Job	4.	12--18.	224--226
	4.	19.	14
	5.	23.	360
	7.	20.	274
	9.	8.	55
	9.	25, 26.	200
	19.	25.	146
	22.	14.	55
	22.	16.	249
	22.	20.	282
	25.	5, 6.	297
Job	26.	14.	268
	38.	25.	127
	38.	30.	333
Pſalm	8.	3, 4.	272
	23.	1.	319
	27.	1.	318
	27.	4.	105
	33.	6, 9.	280
	45.	8.	99
	51.	7.	278
	96.	5.	327
	97.	2.	289
	104.	3.	55
	104.	24.	108
	108.	4.	73
	110.	3.	81, 82
	110.	7.	82, 83
	136.	9.	245
	139.	2.	212
	139.	7, 8, 9.	198

	chap.	ver.	page
Pſalm	139.	10.	211
Prov.	4.	15.	139
Eccleſ.	12.	3, 9.	32
Cant.	2.	1.	97
	6.	10.	250
Iſaiah	2.	11.	356
	9.	3.	298
	14.	23.	238
	29.	8.	220
	33.	15.	139
	33.	17.	104
	35.	1.	129
	38.	11.	206
	40.	12.	285
	40.	15.	269
	40.	29, 30, 31.	281
	41.	10.	308
	42.	3.	309
	49.	13.	294
	51.	16.	156
	53.	3.	162
	55.	13.	129
	58.	10.	131
	61.	10.	103
Jer.	31.	12.	129
	49.	11.	29
Ezek.	16.	63.	276
Dan.	9.	24.	251
	12.	3.	331
Hab.	1.	9.	364
	3.	4.	116
	3.	11.	323
Zech.	9.	17.	292
	13.	1.	297
Matt.	6.	25.	320
Luke	7.	12.	233
	14.	23.	111
Luke	15.	11, &c.	301, 302
	18.	19.	292
John	1.	3.	117
	3.	3.	228
	5.	17.	94
	10.	9.	34
	11.	26.	56
	12.	32.	316
	14.	6.	134
	14.	9.	314
Acts	9.	1.	303
	20.	28.	278
Rom.	5.	8.	293
	5.	20.	302
	13.	14.	103
1 Cor.	1.	24.	313
	1.	30.	246
	15.	41, 42.	334
2 Cor.	4.	17.	213
	6.	16.	6
	9.	8.	300
Gal.	2.	20.	137
Eph.	3.	10.	313
	3.	18, 19.	274
	3.	20.	283
Phil.	2.	6, 7, 8.	272, 273
	3.	10.	137
Col.	2.	3.	315
Heb.	1.	2, 3.	118
	7.	26.	276
	8.	10.	318
	12.	2.	133
1 Pet.	1.	12.	315
2 Pet.	3.	10.	241
Rev.	10.	1,—6.	202, 203
	12.	1.	159
	21.	1.	165

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